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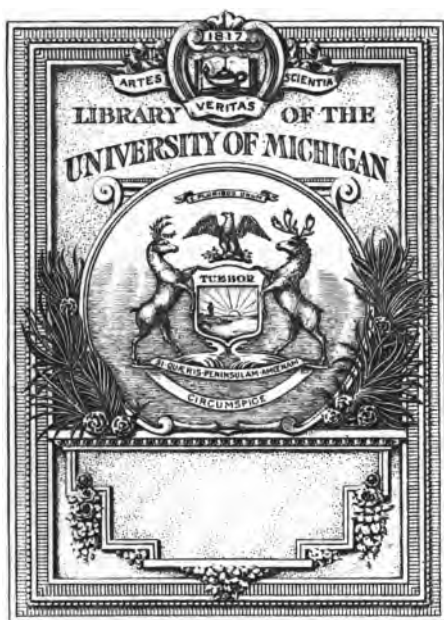
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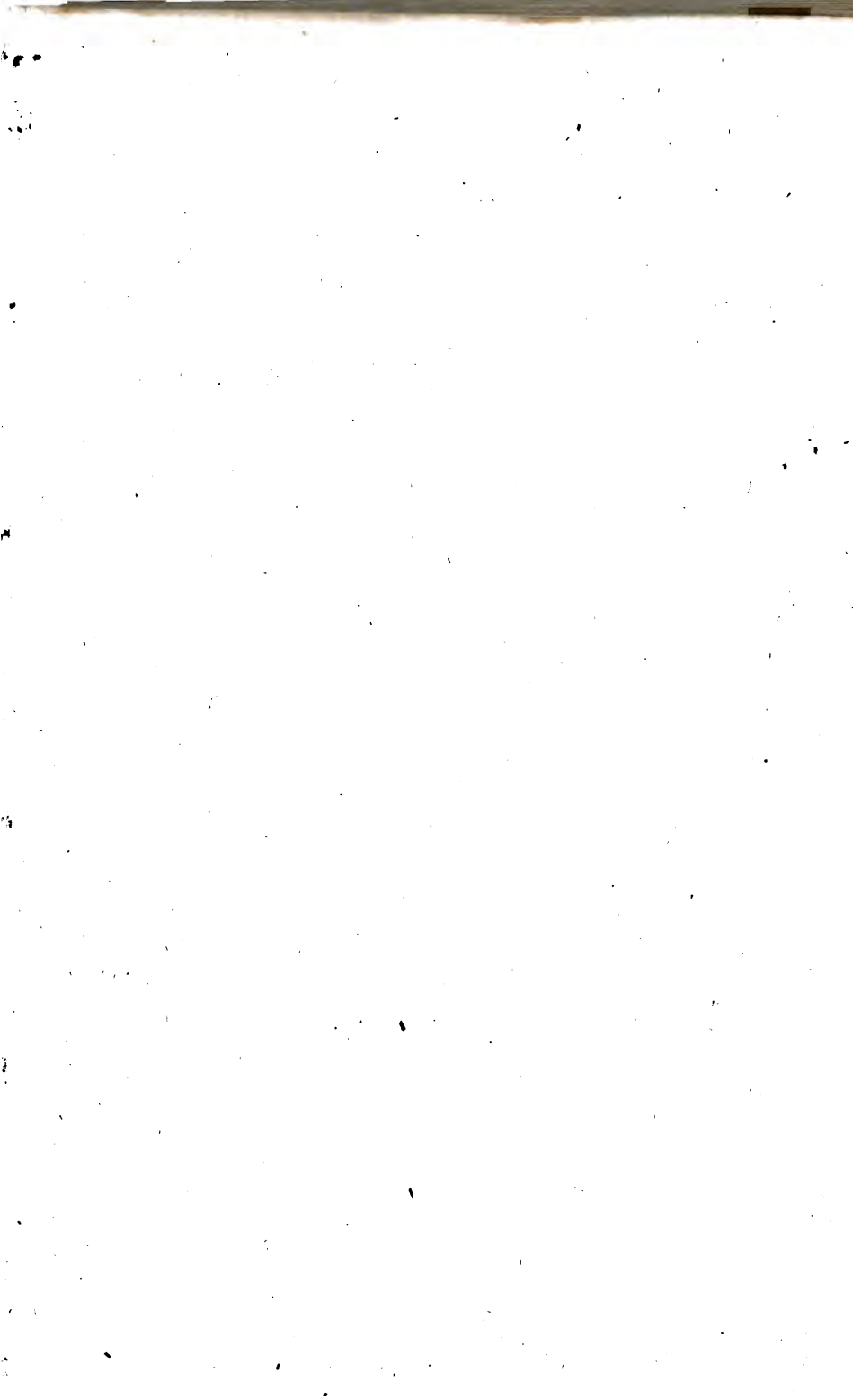
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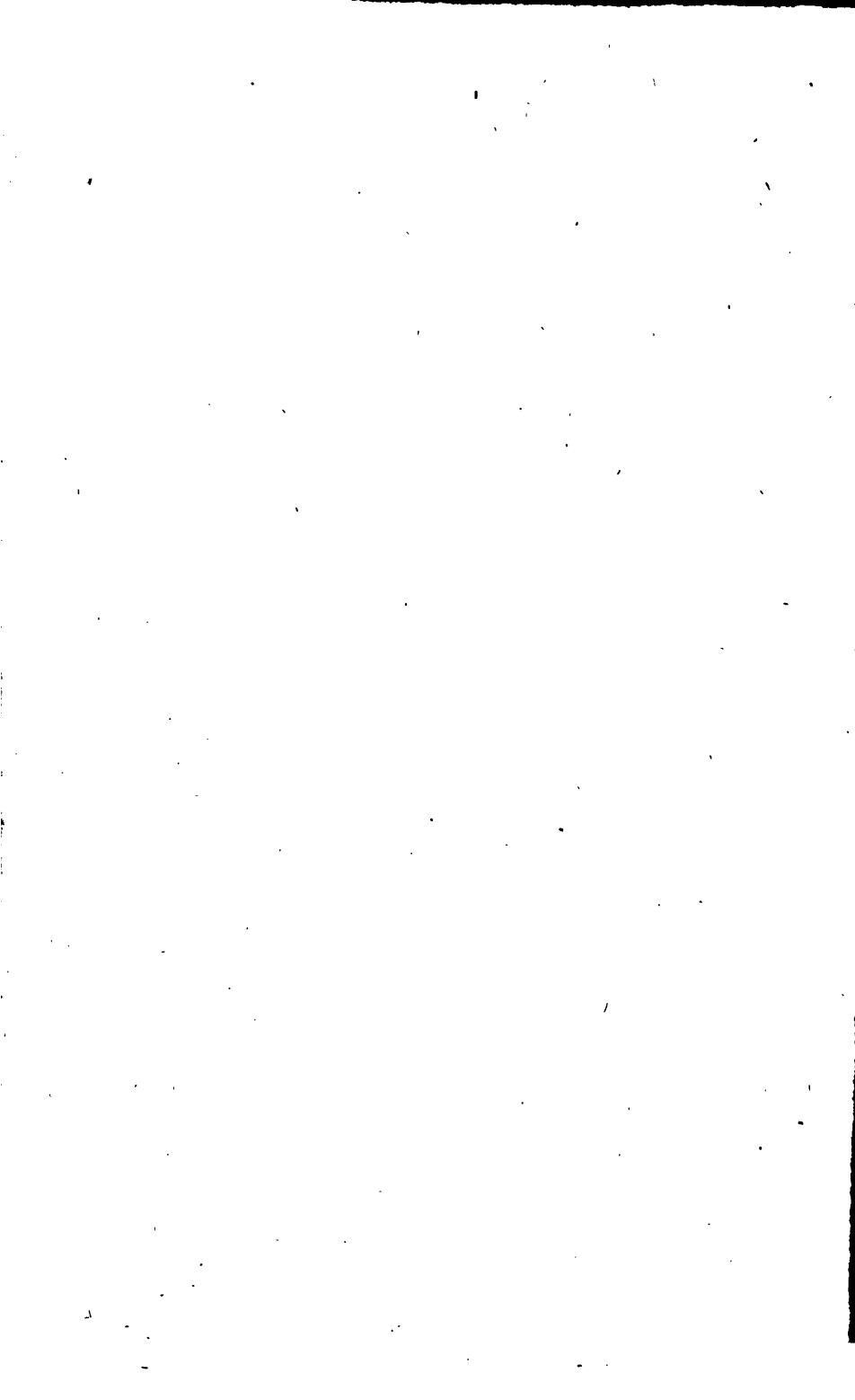
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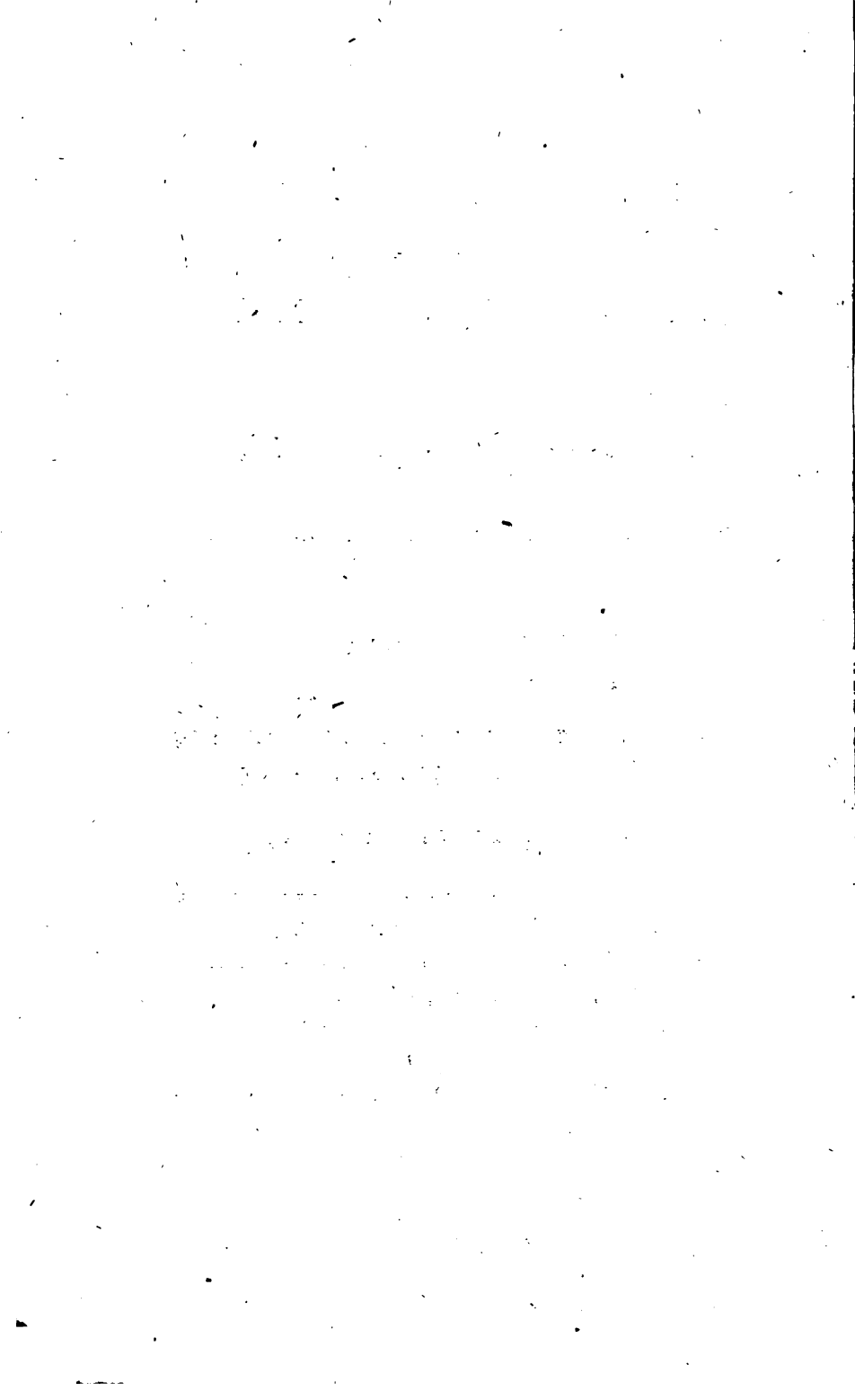
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M E M O I R S
OF THE
K I N G S OF F R A N C E,
OF THE
R A C E OF V A L O I S.

INTERSPERSED WITH INTERESTING ANECDOTES.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A T O U R
THROUGH THE WESTERN, SOUTHERN, AND
INTERIOR PROVINCES OF FRANCE,
IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

and William
By **NATH: WRAXALL, Jun: Esq;**

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR EDWARD AND CHARLES DILLY.

M.DCC.LXXVII

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V.I.

TO THE
EARL OF HILSBOROUGH,

MY LORD,

IF the memoirs and anecdotes of illustrious men have, in all ages, been interesting to mankind in general, how much more so must they be to those who move in the same sphere, and seem to be in a manner connected with them by rank, occupation, and character?

It was the sense of this peculiar propriety, which first made me desirous of addressing the following sheets to your Lordship.

What

iv DEDICATION.

What other motives concurred in suggesting the wish, I am withheld from expressing, by the apprehension of offending that delicacy which never fails to characterise great minds, and which leaves me only the liberty of declaring in general terms, the sincere respect and admiration, with which I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

most obedient,

humble servant,

London, New Bond-street,

November 22, 1776.

N. WRAXALL, Jun^r.

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OF THE

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 flections.*

THE history of France may be con- sidered as abounding more in those interesting scenes which touch the heart, than any other,

The annals of England are bolder, and marked with stronger colours ; but, like the genius of the nation, they are austere and gloomy. Few of those pleasing and elegant anecdotes occur, which soften the horror of battles, and open the gentler sources of entertainment. The long wars and alternate massacres of the two houses of York and Lancaster, were followed by the capricious tyranny of the family of Tudor. Even

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Even Elizabeth's reign, justly renowned for policy and wisdom, is not comparable, for refinement and cultivation of manners, to the court of Catharine of Medicis. The efforts of a passion for liberty, however noble and justifiable in themselves, mingled with the frenzy of fanaticism, impeded the entrance of those humanizing arts which polish society, during the greater part of the seventeenth century; and Charles the second, educated in foreign countries, and habituated to more courtly climes, first introduced that spirit of gallantry, which was unknown before to the nation, or at least but faintly characterised it.

The French history, on the contrary, is exuberant in those strokes and characters which bring the sovereign immediately to our view, and even divest him of all that splendor or dignity, which usually veils him from observation. The little weaknesses of the heart, the trespasses of passion, how infinitely do they engage! We contemplate ourselves, we pity, and we

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forgive.—Why are Francis the first, and Henry the fourth, so peculiarly objects of the attachment of every feeling reader? Because they were distinguished by those amiable and engaging foibles which serve to contrast the virtues of the warrior and the king, which nature has almost constantly and inseparably interwoven in animated and exalted bosoms. We like to quit the council-board, or the plain of carnage and desolation, to follow the man, and behold him in the retirements of private life.

From this principle it is, that Memoirs, though less noble and august than History, are yet generally more just to nature, and interest us in a livelier degree. Confined to a narrower sphere, but diffuse and minute, they satisfy the restless curiosity of the mind, to know those trivial and unimportant transactions of the individual, which History disdains to enumerate, and passes over in silence.

In these sources of information, the French are as profuse, as we seem to have

been barren, and unproductive: nor are the amours and intrigues of the court of James the first better known than those of Francis the first, though posterior by near a century.

There is, however, a point, beyond which a liberal but corrected curiosity carries not its researches. The events of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries are wrapped in too gross a barbarism, and obscured by too profound an ignorance, to merit the pains or repay the trouble of an elaborate search. Scarce any materials are procurable; scarce any of the great actuating motives which then influenced the princes or people exist in any shape at present; scarce any deductions are applicable to these times, from the conduct or policy of those. As knowledge and letters broke in upon this darkness, every thing rises in its effect upon the mind, and becomes of importance. The objects swell to the view, and are more intimately discernable.—There is, perhaps, no exact and precise æra at which

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to date this attestation. I cannot extend it higher than the accession of Philip de Valois; to bring it down to that of Charles the seventh may be too severe. — Let us begin with the reign of Charles the fifth.

I pretend not to give any accurate picture of kings or governments; I boast not to throw many new lights on history; I mean not to enter into a chronological narration of facts. — My wish is to place before the reader those striking qualities of the successive princes, which bring them forward to the eye; and characterize the manners of the age in which they flourished; to make him acquainted with the chief ministers, or mistresses, or generals, who acted the second parts under them; to allow myself the fullest liberty of reflection, of censure, of admiration, uninfluenced by prescription, prejudice, or country.

If we survey the situation of France at the period with which I have chosen to
6 begin,

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begin, it presents a scene of desolation, and almost of anarchy. The unjust pretensions of Edward the third of England to the crown, had involved the kingdom in blood and ruin. If he did not attain the complete gratification of his ambition, his glory at least was satiated by the captivity of John; and the peace of Bretigny had restored to him all those provinces which his ancestors had possessed in Guyenne and Gascony. His son, the Black Prince, yet dreadful from the fields of Crecy and of Poitiers, held his court in these dominions. He was still in the prime of manhood, and his character, adorned with all the shining qualities of a warrior and a sovereign, spread terror to the remotest confines of the French monarchy.

Charles the Bad, king of Navarre, had already been active in all the commotions of the preceding reign; he had pretensions to the crown in right of his mother Jane, daughter of Louis the tenth, and his turbulent and discontented spirit induced him to form alliances of the closest nature

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with the English. Nature had endowed him with all those talents and qualifications, which, under the guidance of a vicious heart, are eminently pernicious. Munificent and generous, he captivated the multitude. Versed in all the arts of address, and even of eloquence to varnish over his crimes, he had boldness enough to perpetrate the most atrocious. An avowed and inveterate enemy to Charles, he had given him poison when dauphin, and though the effects of it were retarded, they yet terminated in his death some years afterwards. Fickle and perfidious, he violated even his interests to gratify his passions, and trampled on the laws of consanguinity, of patriotism, and of honour.

Bands of desperate banditti, to whom the late wars had given birth, and whom the peace had rendered unnecessary, overran the provinces, and added to the general confusion. The lands lay desert and uncultivated; a plague had swept away prodigious numbers of the people; and the

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the taxes, which the ransom of the late king and the disorders of the state had increased to an unprecedented degree, tended to produce a spirit of revolt and disaffection among them.

Charles had only attained his twenty-first year when he ascended the throne, but he had been educated in the school of great princes, adversity. Instructed by the fatal experience of his father and grandfather, he studiously avoided those errors into which their presumption and rashness had led them.

A train of victory and conquest had raised the courage of the English nation, and depressed the genius of France. Two able and powerful princes commanded them, both in the vigor of their age. Though the storm had spent its force, it was not yet subsided, nor did any apparent decline in their affairs mark the moment when they might be attacked with success. Charles knew how to adopt that wary and temporising policy, which peculiarly distinguishes statesmen born to retrieve the affairs of empires,

TO MEMOIRS OF JOHN

empires, and which himself always enjoys, sustains its ends. It is not fortune, but wisdom, that disposes of the events of human life.

A circumstance which at first seemed to carry the English glory to the greatest height, opened to Charles the occasion he so much desired, and enabled him from the recesses of the Low Countries to regain without a battle what both his predecessors had lost. Pedro, surnamed the Cruel and the Wicked, reigned in Castile. He had put his queen to death by poison, thought young and beautiful, and virtuous, to gratify a mistress to whom he was enslaved. He had murdered one of his brothers, and attempted the lives of the others. Henry de Trastemare, the eldest of these, weary of the tyrant's excesses, and pushed by despair, fled into France. Charles the fifth received him with open arms, lent him a general and troops, with which he returned into Spain, and by whose assistance he dispossessed his rival.

Pedro, detested and odious even to foreigners,

adversely, endeavoured in vain to find an ally in Portugal; and after wandering some time in Galicia, he embarked for Bourdeaux, to implore the protection and assistance of the prince of Wales. Fond of military fame, and flattered by the title of restorer or deliverer of kings, in an evil hour the prince consented. He marched across the Pyrenees, and met his antagonist in the plains of Navarrette. Victory, which still waited on him, declared in his favour. He replaced Pedro on the throne, and was repaid with that ingratitude which he ought to have expected. Scarce could he carry back to France the half of his troops, thinned by discontents, unrecompensed, and discontented. He himself could not escape the attacks of a disease, which, though not immediately mortal, incapacitated him for these feats of arms, and that exertion of personal prowess, which had rendered him so eminent and renowned.

Bertrand du Guesclin, only the second captain of his age while the Black Prince could

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could bear the weight of armour; who had been twice his prisoner, and whom he had set free from a magnanimous contempt of his capacity, now came forward. Charles put into his hand the constable's sword, and ordered him to unsheath it against the enemies of France. In vain did the conqueror of Poitiers attempt to support the great name which he had acquired in war. Vainly, with an indignant pride, did he threaten to attend his sovereign lord, who summoned him as vassal, with sixty thousand men, and a helmet on his head. Debilitated, feeble, and depressed by sickness, he made only some ineffectual efforts to stem the torrent of adverse fortune. His death soon followed, and the minority which took place under his son, left Charles and du Guesclin an almost undisputed conquest.

In a few years all the victories of Edward were rendered abortive, and of the vast dominions which he had acquired, only Calais, Bourdeaux, and Bayonne remained to his successor. France had re-acquired

quired her natural and ancient ascendant; a wise and vigorous administration succeeding to the past convulsions, produced effects the most beneficial. Order and tranquillity began to resume their seat in the provinces from which they had so long been banished, and the house of Valois no longer held a precarious throne; when Charles expired in the prime of his age. Historians attribute it to the effects of that poison which the king of Navarre had administered to him many years before, and the consequences of which a German physician had protracted in some degree, by an issue in his arm, which he at the same time predicted must be followed by death whenever it closed. Whether this story does not carry with it a certain air of the marvellous, or whether poisons can be thus delayed and mitigated, may perhaps appear doubtful*. Whatever was the cause,

* All the cotemporary writers agree in the assertion, that the king of Navarre administered poison to the dauphin; and that it was so violent as to cause his
hair,

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cause, the effect was ruinous and destructive to the kingdom. With the king expired the guardian genius of the monarchy, and France, rescued by his wisdom, relapsed into all the miseries she had previously experienced.

It is unnecessary to draw the portrait of Charles the fifth: it is beheld in the epitome of his reign. His sagacity, his masterly and tempered policy, were superior to all the eclat of military ardor. He foresaw the evils which must inevitably

hair, nails, and the external skin to come off. The emperor Charles the fourth sent him a physician, who in some degree suspended the progress, and diminished the mortal tendency of the venom, by opening a fistula in his arm. Charles the Bad himself survived the king of France about seven years, and perished by a death equally singular and deplorable, in a very advanced age.—He was attacked with the leprosy, a disease, in that century, common through all Europe. His physicians had ordered him to be wrapped in bandages of linen previously steeped in brandy and sulphur. A spark of fire accidentally falling on him, he was so miserably burnt, before his attendants could extinguish it, that he expired at Pampelona only three days after.

from

enfer to the state from the situation of affairs, but he foresaw without being able to redress them. He had intended to vest the regency in the queen, one of the most accomplished and virtuous princesses of her time; but death deprived the kingdom of this resource; and Bertrand du Guesclin, from whose valour and conduct the state might have drawn infinite advantages, was now no more. Perhaps no death was ever more fatal to France, except that of Henry the second, which opened the wars of Calvinists and of the League; nor can it be doubted, that if Charles had lived a few years longer, he would have obtained the most complete superiority over the English, whom the vices of Richard the second involved in all the confusion of civil discord.

Charles the sixth, who succeeded, was only twelve years of age; and as it was therefore necessary to appoint a regent, the late king, conscious that his brother the duke of Anjou had the justest claim

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from proximity of blood, nominated him to that charge previous to his death; and his first care was to assume the power: but as the person of the prince and the care of his education were consigned to other hands, these divided and jarring interests soon broke out into open animosity. The regent seems to be marked by no other qualities than an unbounded rapacity, and an inordinate ambition; vices too common to persons of exalted stations to form any great discriminating character!

The duke of Berri, third son of John, was a prince of mean abilities, and whom the superior talents of his competitors in administration ever retained in a sort of subordination and inferiority.

Philip the youngest, duke of Burgundy, was already celebrated by his valour, and powerful from his dominions. The favourite of his father, by whose side he was taken prisoner at the battle of Poitiers, when his other sons deserted him; John had distinguished his courage and attachment by a reward worthy a sovereign, the investiture

investiture of Burgundy, the greatest tie dependant on the crown. In this sacrifice to affection, he violated the rules of sound policy, and laid the foundation of ills which his descendants had cause to regret. Superadded to a dukedom in possession, Philip had a vast territory in expectation by his marriage with the heiress of the count of Flanders; and as he was eminent for intrepidity, and not defective in capacity, he formed an insuperable barrier to the power which the regent claimed, and attempted to exercise. The authority of this latter was, however, of short duration, and that lust of dominion which distinguished him, was the immediate cause of his ignominy and death.

The dissolute and voluptuous Joan, descended from Charles of Anjou, brother of St. Louis, reigned in Naples. Charles de Durazzo, her relation, whom she had adopted as her successor, and whom she had bound by every obligation to gratitude, by an act of the basest inhumanity deposed and murdered his benefactress: previous

vious to her death, the unfortunate queen called to her rescue the duke of Anjou, and instituted him to the succession.

Inflamed with desire to possess the diadem devolved to him, the regent redoubled his exactions on the people, seized on all the treasures which the late king had concealed in the walls of the castle of Melun; and encouraged by the Antipope, from whom he received the crown at Avignon, he marched his troops into Italy, consisting of thirty thousand cavalry—but the Neapolitan prince, too wise to hazard a battle, and skilled in all the duplicity of Italian negotiation, deluded his rival by challenges which he never meant to fulfil, and protracted the execution of them till famine and disease began to waste his forces. Surrounded, harrassed, and continually pursued by a superior army, the duke of Anjou was at length reduced to such extreme distress, that of all the immense treasures which he had carried from France, he had only one suit of arms made of painted stuff, and a single cup of silver.

Dejected

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Dejected with such a series of calamities, forgotten in France, and unassisted by his brothers, he at length sunk under the pressure, and died in Calabria in the deepest want, and almost abandoned.

If we turn our view to France, we shall find all the disorders and oppressions which usually attend on minorities.—The dukes of Berri and Burgundy, greedy of power, and using it to the injury of the state, gave rise by their exactions to sedition and tumult. The young king, whom his father had begun to train in sentiments of virtue and greatness, neglected in his education, studiously kept from an acquaintance with the affairs of his kingdom, and only taught to follow the chase, or immersed in debauchery, promised no redress to these misfortunes. His heart was generous, beneficent, and friendly; he loved his people, he wished, and even endeavoured to give them proofs of this disposition: his understanding, though much uncultivated, and left to unfold itself without any aid, yet appears to have been

clear, just, and manly. As he approached to years of maturity, the authority of his uncles diminished; and when he first assumed the reins of government, he conciliated the affections of his people, by depriving the duke of Berri of the government of Languedoc, which he had greatly abused, and by the absolute dismissal of the duke of Burgundy.

The kingdom began to recover from the evils of a divided legislature, when an accident the most extraordinary and deplorable renewed and aggravated them—I mean, the king's madness. The circumstances of it are very curious. We must go back a little, to trace them to the source.

: During the extreme distresses to which Louis duke of Anjou was reduced, in his unfortunate expedition against Naples, he dispatched the Seigneur de Craon into France, to procure a supply of money; but this nobleman, after having raised a considerable sum, instead of carrying it to his master, squandered it at Venice in entertainments

entertainments and courtezans. On his return to Paris, the duke of Berri accused him as the author of his brother's death ; and having afterwards committed an assassination in the streets, he was obliged to take shelter in Bretagne, where the duke received and protected him. Charles, instigated by his ministers, demanded the criminal, and on the duke's refusal, prepared to seize him by force ; he set out in person at the head of a considerable army : as he continued his march through a forest between Mans and La Fleche, in the day-time, a tall man, black and hideous, came from among the trees, and seizing his horse's bridle, cried out, " Arrete Roi ! ou
 " vas tu ? Tu es trahi."——then disappeared. The king however pursued his journey, in defiance of this denunciation, when a second accident, purely casual, produced on him effects the most violent and unhappy.—It was in the month of August, and the heats were insupportable. A page who carried the king's lance, being fallen asleep on his horse, let it fall upon a hel-

met which another bore before him ; the noise which this caused, the sight of the lance, and the words of the phantom recurring all at once to the king's imagination, he thought they were going to deliver him to his enemies, and this apprehension acting strongly on his senses, produced an instant fit of madness. He drew his sword, and striking furiously at all those about him, killed and wounded several, before any one had force or address enough to seize him : they effected it at last ; the king spent with his efforts, fell into a sort of lethargic swoon, and in this condition they carried him, tied down, in a cart, to the city of Mans.

The story of the man in the wood appears at first sight so apparently fictitious, that one should certainly be induced to treat it as such, if, superadded to the universal testimony of the cotemporary writers, some of them did not give us reason to believe, that the duke of Burgundy set on foot this engine. He was the strict ally of the duke of Bretagne ; he had strongly
opposed

opposed the king's march; he was become unnecessary and powerless. Charles had only just recovered from a fever at Amiens, in which he had given some symptoms of a disordered understanding, which the phantom and fright were extremely calculated, in that superstitious and barbarous age, to heighten into frenzy,

The miserable prince recovered his senses on the third day, but not that clearness of perception and understanding which he had previously enjoyed; and the expedition being rendered abortive, he was carried back to Paris by his uncles.

The incapacity of the king for public affairs reduced him once more to a state of tutelage; and the necessity of vesting the regal power in more able hands, brought into light on this occasion two characters which hitherto lay in a sort of obscurity—I mean the queen, and the duke of Orleans. The first of these, Isabella of Bavaria, was a princess of uncommon personal beauty: fond of pleasure, to which she sacrificed without re-

straint, her thirst of power was not less insatiable : of captivating address, she excelled in the arts of intrigue. Violent, vindictive, and capable of actions the most savage and unnatural in the pursuit of her favourite objects, she involved the kingdom in war and tumult ; violated the first feelings of a parent, by disinheriting her offspring ; and lived to become supremely odious and despicable, even to that party for whom she had sacrificed every consideration of honour or humanity.

The duke of Orleans was the only brother of the king : he had just attained his twentieth year, when the event which I have related placed him in a situation to pretend to the possession of the first office under the crown. If his unripe youth seemed to disqualify him for so high and important a trust, his proximity of blood approached him by one degree nearer to the throne than his competitor the duke of Burgundy. His character resembled in many respects that of his uncle the duke of Anjou, late regent. The same rapacity ;

city: equal or greater profusion: more impetuous passions: Amorous from complexion, and formed by nature to succeed in gallantry, he set no bounds, he drew no veil before his excesses. Though married very early to Valentina of Milan, a princess of genius, beauty and accomplishments, and who was most tenderly attached to him, he indulged himself in all the libertinism of debauchery, and after the madness of his brother, entered into connections with the queen, which there is every reason to suppose were criminal and incestuous. His ambition was however disappointed for the present, and the states, being assembled in this critical emergency, conferred the administration of affairs on the duke of Burgundy.—Meanwhile the wretched king recovered in some degree his health and intellects, when another accident, scarce less extraordinary than those which first deprived him of them, again produced a fatal relapse. As it shews the nature of the diversions of the court in that uncultivated age, I shall relate it.

At

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At a ball which was given in honour of the marriage of one of the queen's attendants, the king danced ; a band of masques entered the apartment, linked together with chains, and habited as bears. The duke of Orleans, willing to regard them closely, took a flambeau in his hand, and holding it too near, unhappily set fire to their habits, which being covered with pitch were instantly in a blaze ; three of them were burned to death : the room was all in flames ; every one anxious for their own preservation forgot the king, and he was on the point of being involved in this dismal catastrophe, when the duchess of Berri, with infinite presence of mind, wrapt him in her manteau, and preserved him from the danger.—This rude shock produced a second access of frenzy, and, as the ideas of magic and sorcery were universally received in those times, the people imputed it to charms and incantations. After all the arts of medicine then known were exhausted, recourse was had to magicians, processions, and fasts—but the malady was

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was incurable, and accompanied the unhappy monarch, though with intervals of reason, to the tomb.

The government during the succeeding years presents a frightful picture. The discordant interests and contending parties of the two dukes of Orleans and Burgundy, grew up into factions of the most rancorous and inveterate animosity. The people were loaded with exactions the most oppressive. Order, oeconomy, public glory, and internal tranquillity had fled from France. The wise laws and salutary edicts of Charles the fifth were obliterated, or counteracted, and the kingdom, involved in calamity, was only preserved from a renewal of the English invasions by similar evils, which prevented and retarded them.

In his intervals of recovery, Charles was carried as a pageant to spectacles of state; he met the English prince (Richard the second) near Calais, where they formed an unnatural alliance between this latter and Isabella, daughter to Charles, only seven years of age, and which was never consummated.

summed. A year or two afterwards, he was brought to Rheims, to receive Wenceslaus the emperor: That brutal and despicable monarch, whom his subjects, weary of his excesses, justly deposed, amid the splendor of his reception, gave proofs of a subjection to his appetites the most unrestrained and debased. When the dukes of Berri and Bourbon came in the morning to carry him to a banquet, to which the king had previously invited him, they found him vomiting the wine he had drank, and incapacitated by drunkenness for the entertainment *.

* These visits of sovereign princes to each other, were common in that age. Charles the fourth, emperor of Germany, made one to Charles the fifth of France, at Paris, and was magnificently received.—Wenceslaus being totally incapable, from drunkenness, of waiting on the king, was regaled by him the following day, when he exerted the greatest effort of restraint and self-denial over his appetites, in not intoxicating himself before dinner. The festivities and debaucheries of the two monarchs rekindled Charles's madness, and necessitated him to break up the interview, and return to the capital.

When

∴ When Charles relapsed into madness* he was violent and untractable : he could not support the queen's presence, and often proceeded even to strike her. Valentina duchess of Orleans alone was acceptable to

* The picture which Jean Juvenal des Ursins, (a cotemporary writer of great credit,) has given of the king's unhappy malady, is so simple and touching, that I cannot dispense with inserting it. It will excite commiseration very highly.

“ C'étoit grande pitié de la maladie du Roi, et ne
 “ connoissoit personne quelconque. Lui-même se de-
 “ connoissoit, et disoit que ce n'étoit il pas. On
 “ lui amenoit la Reine, et sembloit qu'il ne l'eut onc-
 “ ques vue ; et n'en avoit point memoire, ne con-
 “ noissance, ne d'hommes ou de femmes quelconques,
 “ excepté de la duchesse d'Orleans ; car il la voyoit
 “ et regardoit très volontiers, et l'appelloit belle sœur.
 “ Et comme souvent il y a de mauvaises langues, on
 “ disoit, et publioient aucuns, qu'elle l'avoit enfor-
 “ celé par le moyen de son Pere le duc de Milan, qui
 “ étoit Lombard, et que en son pays on usoit de telles
 “ choses ; et l'une de plus dolentes et courouçées
 “ qui y fut, c'étoit la duchesse d'Orleans, et n'est à
 “ croire où presumer qu'elle eut voulu faire ou
 “ penser.”

It appears by this account, with what contempt he treated the popular prejudices against the duchess of Orleans.

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him ; and as her appearance always calmed his agitations, and produced on him those effects, of which even lunatics are susceptible towards an object beloved, she became detestable to the people ; who imputed all these symptoms and changes to magical powers, which she was supposed to have used to destroy the king.—The administration mean while fluctuated between the rival factions : that of Orleans gained a short ascendant, which was abused to such severe oppression, that the Burgundian party regained the superiority ; when the king emerging from one of his long fits of insanity, and influenced by the cries of his people ; deprived both the dukes of all authority, which he principally vested in the queen and council.

The two factions, confirmed by perpetual competition, were transmitted to succeeding generations. Philip duke of Burgundy died in Brabant, and his son John, surnamed “ Sans Peur,” succeeded to his ample territories, to his place and pretensions. He had all that magnificence and princely

princely splendor in his character which so peculiarly distinguished the house of Burgundy, and seemed hereditary in the line. His intrepidity and love of power were not inferior to his munificence; and the turbulent chaos of government in the court, soon gave him an opportunity to renew the scenes which had been acted under his father.

Charles, relapsed again into the horrors of his former condition, could oppose no barrier to the oppressions or malversations of those who possessed themselves of his authority. Isabella and the duke of Orleans had entered into connections of the most intimate nature, and divided between them the regal power. The clamours of the Parisians, scandalized at an union so apparently personal and unjustifiable, and driven to despair by the unprecedented rapacity exercised over them, recalled the Burgundian; and he was received with acclamations. He took his seat in the council: the queen and duke

retired to Melun, and left the field to their competitor.

John neglected not the occasion to confirm his influence. — He affianced his daughter to the young dauphin Louis: he affected an attention to the unhappy king, whom his wife and brother had shamefully abandoned to want and nastiness during his fits*. He gained the people by an alleviation of the imposts: and a mock reconciliation at last took place, on which the queen returned to Paris, and the two dukes embracing, heard mass together, and swore on the sacra-

* Juyenal des Ursins draws a frightful and almost incredible picture of Charles the sixth's miserable condition in his accessions of frenzy. The governante of the royal children avowed to him in one of his lucid intervals, that she frequently had not wherewithal to feed or cloath them.---“ Alas !” answered the king, with a sigh, “ I am myself no better treated.”--- He held in his hand a golden cup, in which he had just drank, and this he gave to her for the supply of his children's necessities.

ments

ments an eternal oblivion of past animosities.

Those who know human nature well, will not be surprised to find the duke of Orleans's assassination following almost immediately these marks of dissembled friendship. He was returning from the hotel de St. Pol, where he had spent the evening with Isabella, who was newly recovered from a lying-in. The duke rode on a mule, accompanied only by two or three valets : it was night : a Norman gentleman, whom revenge for the loss of a post of which he had deprived him, stimulated to the attempt, surrounded him with eighteen assassins in the "rue Bar-bette." He cut off his hand with the first blow of a battle-ax : at the second, he tumbled him from his mule ; and with the third, he opened his skull, leaving him dead on the ground. All the troop then made their escape, and took refuge in the duke of Burgundy's palace.

The motives to this detestable crime are somewhat ambiguous and obscure : the

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French historians say they were more personal than political. The gallantries of the duke of Orleans were notorious; and it is pretended, that he had not only profited of the duchess of Burgundy's favours, but had even the temerity and insolence to brave the unfortunate husband, by introducing him into a cabinet hung with the portraits of those women he had enjoyed, among which his own wife held a distinguished place *. To whatever cause

* Duhaillan assigns this amour as the cause of his murder; and Brantome confirms it as the tradition of his time. These are his words:

“ Louis duc d'Orleans, aieul de Louis douze,
 “ s'étant vanté tout haut dans un banquet ou étoit
 “ le duc Jean de Bourgogne son cousin, qu'il avoit
 “ en son cabinet les portraits des plus belles dames
 “ dont il avoit joui; par cas fortuit, un jour le duc
 “ Jean entrant dans ce cabinet, la premiere dame
 “ qu'il vit pourtraite, et se presenta du premier aspect
 “ devant ses yeux, ce fut sa noble dame et épouse,
 “ qu'on tenoit de ce temps très belle.”

Yet Olivier de la Marche in his Memoirs declares, that the duke of Burgundy, too credulous, hastily believed an information given him, that Louis duke of

cause it be ascribed, the kingdom long felt its pernicious consequences, and the perpetrator met with an exact retribution.

of Orleans had plotted to assassinate him, and resolving to anticipate the blow, caused him to be put to death. On that night he had spent part of the evening with Isabella. About seven o'clock, one of the king's valets de chambre came to inform the duke, that his majesty wished to see him immediately on an affair of importance: he went out, accompanied only by two gentlemen, and some footmen who carried flambeaux. The Norman gentleman's name, who headed the band, and dispatched him, was Raoullet Ocquetouville: he had been one of the duke's retainers; and Louis having caused his name to be erased from the list of the officers of his household, he determined on vengeance. The assassins, to elude pursuit, set on fire a neighbouring house, and scattered gins or traps in the streets. The duke of Burgundy affected at first the utmost sorrow for his cousin's death; he attended his funerals, lamented and wept for him—but when it was resolved in council to search the houses of all the princes and nobles, to discover the murderers, he was so troubled and terrified that he took the duke of Bourbon aside, and confessed to him that he was himself the author of the crime. The ensuing day he fled into Flanders with his assassins. These are the chief and most interesting particulars of that atrocious murder.

many years afterwards on the bridge of Montereau.

To give a picture of the reign of Charles the sixth, from this æra to the battle of Azincourt, is to enumerate a series of proscriptions, massacres, and barbarities almost unparalleled in any century. Marius or Sylla never exercised more unrelenting vengeance over their vanquished enemies in ancient Rome, than did the Armagnacs and Burgundians, as they triumphed by turns in Paris. Two thousand citizens perished in one carnage.

The young duke of Orleans, only sixteen years old, succeeded to his father's place, and loudly demanded vengeance for his murder. Valentina, his mother, died of grief and disappointed revenge, in the flower of her age. Isabella, deprived of her lover and her faithful partizan, retired from Paris overcome with terror—while the duke of Burgundy, too powerful to be amenable to punishment, not only avowed his crime, but even attempted to excuse and justify it. The court, the capital,

pital, the kingdom, and the person of the sovereign, were alternately seized on by the opposite leaders. Anarchy and uproar, and all the scourges of public discord, lorded it unrepressed and unrestrained.

The young dauphin, Louis, began to appear amid this scene of confusion; but his character, fickle, inconstant, dissolute, and grasping at unlimited power, rather increased than repressed the accumulated evils of state.

The king, as he regained from time to time some faint gleams of reason, was rendered subservient to every purpose of the predominant faction; and was now the protector, and now the avenger of the duke of Burgundy. During his returns of insanity, he was often indecently neglected, without table, without necessary finances, even almost without changes of habit. As he was generally obstinate likewise, and difficult to manage at these times, a young and beautiful mistress was procured for him, of whom he became enamoured, as he had been of the duchess

Valentina, and who alone had any influence or command over him*.

Paris, long oppressed, became seditious; and as it had suffered so severely from the abuse of the royal power, attempted to repress and reduce it to narrower bounds.

Such was the deplorable condition of the kingdom, when the storm which had long menaced, and which had been pro-

* Odette de Champdivers was daughter to a dealer in horses: she was young, lively, and beautiful. The queen herself first presented her to Charles the sixth: he was presently enamoured of this new mistress. Her authority over him was so great, in his fits of frenzy, that she obtained the name of "La Petite Reine;" under which title she is commonly known in history. The unhappy king, when seized with madness, would often persist to keep the same linen or sheets, how dirty soever; nor could any person except Odette induce him to desist from this resolution. Charles cohabited with her, and even had by her a daughter named Margaret de Valois. Charles the seventh acknowledged her as his sister, gave her a very ample portion, and married her to the Seigneur de Belleville in Poictou. Claude, the last of their descendants, was killed in the battle of Coutras, in 1587.

tracted

tracted by a chain of incidents, burst at length.—Henry the fourth of England, who held his usurpation by a tenure too precarious to engage in foreign wars, was dead; and a young prince to whom the crown descended by a sort of hereditary prescription, and gifted with all the qualities of a warrior and a general, saw and improved the opportunity. He revived the antiquated and ill-founded pretensions of Edward to the crown of France: he landed in Normandy; and by the headstrong impatience of his enemies, renewed at Azincourt the laurels won by his ancestors under Phillip and John. He retired into England, carrying with him the captive princes of the blood.

Consternation and affright were superadded to all the other convulsions of state; and every calamity was heightened by this foreign invasion.—At this juncture the dauphin Louis died. He promised no marks of happier times, nor can his death be regarded as a loss to the kingdom. A dysentery, occasioned by his irregularities, probably carried him off, though poison

was suspected and pretended. His second brother, John, succeeded to his rights.

This prince had been married to the duke of Burgundy's daughter, and was a zealous partizan of the faction; and as he too died within a year after the first dauphin, it has been with more reason supposed that violent and unnatural means were used for that purpose. The story of his mother Isabella having destroyed him by a poisoned chain of gold which she sent him, is evidently false—but it is not equally clear, that Louis duke of Anjou, and king of Sicily, son to the regent who perished in Calabria, was not the author of his death. This prince had married his daughter to Charles duke of Touraine, youngest of the king's sons, and who afterwards mounted the throne; and it is said, that to facilitate the accession of his son-in-law, he had not scrupled to remove both the elder brothers, who stood between him and the crown*.

Charles,

* Mezerai seems to declare Louis the first dauphin poisoned. “ Il tomba malade,” says he, “ d’un
“ flux

KINGS OF FRANCE, &c. 41

Charles, born to reinstate the monarchy, attacked on every side, had been educated in sentiments of the utmost detestation for the duke of Burgundy, and of attachment to the house of Orleans. The queen his mother, who had now united her interest with the former, was therefore sent by his approval and permission under a guard to Tours, after he had executed a singular vengeance on one of her lovers, named Louis Bois-Bourdon; who was tied up in a sack, and precipitated into the Seine, with this label annexed, “*Laissez passer la justice du roi !*”—An outrage which

“*flux de ventre, dont il mourut, non sans des marques apparentes de poison.*”—But he does not mention the perpetrators of this crime. It seems to be a fact much more universally established, that John, duke of Touraine, second dauphin, was put to death by unnatural means. Whether the king of Sicily was the author of it, can by no means be ascertained; but his ambitious character justified the suspicion. Even the duke of Burgundy was accused in the sequel, but with much less reason or probability. He expired at the age of eighteen, at Compiègne in Picardy.

Isabella

Mabella never pardoned him, and which she severely revenged!

The queen's imprisonment was of short duration: she was rescued by the duke of Burgundy, and assumed the regency. It is pretended that she had not less complaisance for the murderer of the duke of Orleans, than she had shewn to the duke himself; nor is there any difficulty in believing, that a princess ever a slave to passions the most impetuous, and whose irregularity of manners was notorious, did not hesitate to gratify her protector and deliverer by every compliance with his wishes. Her age, which was about forty-six or forty-seven years at this time, forms no objection; since she is universally allowed to have possessed a beauty the most captivating and perfect*.

Mean-

* The cotemporary writers in general accuse the duke of Burgundy of criminal connections with the queen. He carried her off from the church of Marmoutier near Tours, and conducted her to Chartres. Pontus Heuterus, in his life of John, expressly mentions

Meanwhile Henry the fifth landing again in Normandy, reduced all that fertile province under his subjection, unopposed by any enemy. The Burgundian party, once more triumphant, re-entered the capital in all the splendor of conquest; and took a vengeance the most sanguinary on their opponents. The wretched king remained in their possession, and scarce was the dauphin saved by Tannegui du Chastel. The English monarch, at the head of a victorious army, approached. He demanded Catherine of France, and the succession to the kingdom, with the immediate investiture of the regency under his father-in-law. Isabella, desperate, unnatural, destitute of every sentiment of a mother or a queen, hesitated not to execute these ignominious and

tions Isabella as *one* of his mistresses. These are his words—"Mulierosior patre multo fuit; viva enim
 "uxore, *pellices* non ignobiles habuit, quorum facile
 "princeps extremis vitæ temporibus, Giac fuit do-
 "mina (de Giac) *ipsaque regis Caroli sexti uxor*, non
 "satis bene audivit."

haughty

haughty demands. She even carried her daughter to Troyes with that intention—but the Burgundian prince, sprung from the blood of France; nor yet lost to the feelings of patriotism, of duty, and of public glory, paused at this fatal step. He saw its almost certain and irremediable consequences: he determined to frustrate them ere too late. An accommodation with the dauphin might yet retrieve the falling state; Charles invited and implored him to it: Every principle of virtue demanded it.

An interview was agreed on at the bridge of Montereau-sur-Yonne; in this, a total amnesty of past crimes, murders, and animosities was to take place on both sides, and a coalition of arms and interests to succeed.—But whether the duke dreaded the vengeance of his cousin's death; or whether he suspected the dauphin's sincerity, he did not come to the place of rendezvous till after he had been waited for fifteen days. It is said his mistress, the lady of Giac, by an ungenerous treachery, persuaded

persuaded him at length to venture. Every precaution was taken to insure his safety: a barrier was erected on the bridge; he placed his guard at one end, and advancing with ten attendants, threw himself on his knees before the dauphin. At that instant Tannegui du Chastel making the signal, leaped the barrier with some others, and giving him the first blow, he was almost immediately dispatched. Though Charles was only a passive spectator of this assassination, yet it cannot be doubted that he was privy to its commission; nor does his unripe age, though it may palliate, exculpate him from the infamy of such a participation, since he continued his protection and favour to its perpetrators*.

Never

* There is a certain veil of uncertainty and darkness drawn over this foul transaction. The partizans of Charles the seventh pretend, that John had intended to execute as bloody and perfidious a vengeance on him at the bridge of Montereau, as he had done on the duke of Orleans some years before at Paris: But there is little probability in this assertion. Juvenal
des

Never was any action more fatal to France. Isabella, loud in her exclamations, and bent on the destruction of her son, called for immediate vengeance.—Philip, who succeeded his father in the dukedom of Burgundy, was compelled to espouse her cause by every principle of filial piety and just resentment. They resolved on a marriage between Catherine, and the Eng-

des Ursins expressly says, “Que la dame de Giac, maitresse du duc, fut celle qui le determina à se trouver à cette entrevue.” If the solicitations of his mistress were requisite to induce him to go to the interview, it is not possible to suspect him of a pre-meditated design to murder the dauphin. Tannequil du Chastel, and John Lowet president of Provence, were the duke’s inveterate and mortal enemies. To delude him more perfectly, the castle of Montreux was delivered into his possession, but destitute either of provisions or engines of defence. The duke came down on the bridge with ten attendants. In the posture he was, on his knees, it was not difficult to dispatch him. Of the persons who accompanied him, only Archembaud de Foix, Seigneur de Noailles, attempted to defend his lord. He perished with him at the same moment. It seems impossible to acquit Charles of a participation in this crime.

lish monarch. It was solemnized at Troyes; and she brought the kingdom in dowry to her husband.

By an unexampled and astonishing concurrence of circumstances, a foreign prince was on the point of being seated in the throne of France. The dauphin, unable to resist so powerful a combination, retired southward, and began to fortify himself in the provinces beyond the Loire. Henry was proclaimed regent, and even took upon him the exercise of the regal power, which the maladies of Charles incapacitated him to use. The defeat and death of his brother, the duke of Clarence, at Bangé in Artois, only protracted for a moment the destruction of the dauphin. The English prince returning from his own kingdom, prepared to push him to the last extremities: he was declared guilty of the duke of Burgundy's murder, summoned to a solemn trial, and disinherited from the succession.

Henry himself began his march from Paris, armed with the united forces of
France

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France and Burgundy.—The moment approached of young Charles's inevitable ruin——when by one of those extraordinary incidents which decide the fate of nations, Henry, the fortunate and the victorious, expired in the flower of youth. As far as human foresight can determine from appearances, had he lived—or even had the succession descended to his brother the duke of Bedford—the family of Valois would have been overwhelmed by such a multiplicity of concomitant evils, and an English usurper established his authority over France.—But by his death the miserable kingdom had time to recover. An infant at the breast succeeded to the two crowns; and the dauphin, re-ascending by slow degrees the hill of fortune, restored his declining affairs.

The death of Henry the fifth was wondrously critical. The miserable Charles, his father-in-law, survived him only six-and-fifty days. He breathed his last in the hotel de St. Pol at Paris, attended in his dying moments by a single gentleman of
the

the bed-chamber, a confessor, and an almoner. No funeral honours were paid him; no prince of the blood attended his procession; and the abandoned wretchedness which marked almost his whole life, attended him to the tomb where he was deposited.

Here let us pause a moment! A mind philosophic and reflective, which views with equal and impartial eye the changes of human affairs, and revolutions of empires;—which regards all those effects or phænomena, imputed by the multitude to supernatural and extraordinary interpositions, as regularly flowing from fixed and stated causes;—which, comprehensive in its survey, enlarged in its conceptions, forms a just and solid estimate of things:—such a spectator will find, at this remarkable æra of the French monarchy, ample field for speculation; and will allow the justice of that observation of the Tacitus of the eighteenth century,

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ture, " That there is in all governments an
 " ultimate point of depression and of ele-
 " vation, at which affairs revert, and re-
 " turn in a contrary direction.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

Political condition of France.—Character of John duke of Bedford.—Accession and distresses of Charles the seventh.—Appearance of the maid of Orleans.—Character of Agnes Soreille.—Deaths of the queen dowager, and duke of Bedford.—Louis the dauphin's treasonable practices, and flight.—Death of Agnes Soreille.—Circumstances of it.—English ultimately driven out of France.—Dauphin's disobedience,—Oppressions, and retreat into Burgundy.—Charles's fruitless attempts to gain possession of his person.—The king's illness.—Death.—Character.

THERE is perhaps no point of time in the history of France more interesting to an English reader, than that where the last chapter concluded. The death of Henry the fifth, arrested in the very moment when he prepared to over-

whelm the dauphin; and that of Charles the sixth, by which the crown devolved to his son; seemed to be events so important, and big with consequences, that a change the most sudden and rapid was to be expected from them.—But though the former of these incidents left the reduction of France incomplete and unfinished, it did not absolutely render it abortive. In John duke of Bedford, left regent of the two kingdoms, survived the spirit of his brother Henry. Even the colours under which he is depicted to us by the French historians, figure a prince worthy of the great trust reposed in him, and capable of all the toils of empire. He had just attained the prime of manhood; nor could the tutelage of his infant nephew, who was still at the breast, have been consigned to more virtuous and able hands. Isabella, the declared enemy of her son; and Philip duke of Burgundy, reduced by a fatal necessity to turn his arms against the protector of his father's murderers, encreased his power:
all

all the northern provinces, and Guyenne, were already reduced under subjection.

Charles, on the other hand, retired into the fortresses of the Cevennes, or the mountains of Auvergne; not yet arrived to years of majority, and only attended by some princes of the blood, and a few brave adventurers animated by considerations of loyalty and love to their expiring country, could only make a feeble opposition to such powerful enemies. On the news of his father's death, he was saluted king by his little band of adherents, and even crowned at Poitiers*; but to so extreme penury was he reduced, that even the affectionate fidelity of his queen, who sold all her plate and jewels for his subsist-

* The dauphin Charles, says Mezerai, was at the castle d'Espailly, near Puy, in Auvergne, when he received the news of his father's death. On the first day he wore mourning: the ensuing one, he dressed himself in scarlet, and after having heard mass, he ordered the banner of France to be elevated in the chapel. The nobles who adhered to him, then saluted him sovereign, with loud acclamations of "Vive le roi!"

ance, scarce sufficed to provide for the immediate wants of his dress and table; and he was driven to distresses only equalled by those which Mary of Medicis, and Henrietta queen of England underwent during their exile in the last century.

During the first six years of his reign, the English arms were almost uniformly triumphant; and though he gained over to his party the celebrated Arthur count de Richemont, brother to the duke of Bretagne; yet this imperious chieftain, rough and ferocious in his manners, treated his sovereign with the most mortifying indignity; and unsheathed the sword of constable, not only against his opponents, but against his dearest favourites, whom he stabbed or drowned even in the royal presence*.

The

* The constable first compelled the king to renounce and banish Louvet, and Tannegui du Chastel, to both of whom he was most warmly attached. The Seigneur de Gyac, who succeeded to their place in Charles's favour and affections, he seized by force

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The little court of Charles was torn by intestine factions ; and he would doubtless have been himself the victim of so many calamities, if similar or fiercer dissensions had not arisen between the two dukes of Burgundy and Gloucester, on the subject of the beautiful Jacqueline countess of Hainault. In vain did Bedford, animated only by motives of the most patriotic and glorious nature, implore his brother to desist from his unjust pretensions. In vain did he represent to him the interests of their common prince and nephew ; and point out to him that the moment was arrived to extinguish for ever the race of Valois.—Gloucester was

at Issoudun in Berri, while in bed, and after some short forms of pretended justice, caused him to be drowned.—Only a few months afterwards, he executed a similar vengeance on the Camus de Beaulieu, another gentleman obnoxious to his displeasure, and acceptable to the king. The court was at Poitiers ; and the marechal de Bouffac, by order of the count de Richemont, killed the unhappy favourite in the street, and almost under his master's eye.

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deaf to his entreaties or expostulations; and that precise juncture in the affairs of human life, which if passed, rarely or never returns, was irrecoverably lost. The regent, notwithstanding, though almost unsupported by his allies, maintained the war: he found resources in his own character, in his popularity, his affability, his munificence, and clemency of administration, which had attached to him even the Parisians.

The English were animated by a long train of success, commanded by experienced leaders, and opposed to troops dispirited and sinking under adverse fortune. The memorable siege of Orleans was undertaken. Though Dunois, the immortal bastard of Orleans, exerted every effort of valour and conduct against the besiegers, it was vigorously pressed. Charles already began to meditate a retreat into Dauphiné, and all seemed to conspire for his destruction; when an occurrence the most singular in the records of history, turned the current in his favour, and re-
stored

stored him to the throne of his ancestors.
 —I mean the appearance of Joan d'Arc.
 A village girl, either instigated by an enthusiastic apprehension of supernatural assistance, or instructed to feign such a belief, quits her obscurity in Lorraine, and goes to find the king at Chinon.

However we may suppose Joan herself to have been persuaded of her divine mission, it is scarce possible to imagine that Charles and his courtiers accepted her offers from any other motive, than that of trying an extraordinary and desperate remedy, in the present disorders of the State. The age was ignorant, credulous, barbarous, and superstitious to a high degree : it was exactly adapted to their apprehensions and religious terrors ; and while the count de Dunois really commanded, Joan, unfurling the sacred standard, headed the troops chosen to succour the city. It succeeded even beyond expectation. Like another Gideon, armed with ethereal protection, she at-

6

tacked

tacked enemies already dismayed with fears, and obtained an easy conquest.

Not content with raising the siege of Orleans, and animated by the fortunate issue of her first essay in arms, she pushed her views to the greatest length. One combat prepared the way for a second; and still advancing through provinces which had been totally in the power of the English, she led her royal votary to Rheims, and saw him solemnly inaugurated.

The perfidy, or the imprudence of the governor of Compeigne, delivered her at length into the hands of her adversaries. Even then she behaved, though defenceless, and menaced with death, in a manner becoming a heroine. Her enthusiasm and reliance on superior aid supported her courage—for Charles, who had derived all those benefits he wanted from such an engine, made no effort to procure her release; and a barbarous resentment, unworthy and unbecoming generous minds, prompted the English, who had suffered

suffered so severely from her prowess, to take a cruel and inhuman revenge.

Meanwhile, though the duke of Bedford, in the hope of re-animating his depressed countrymen, caused young Henry to be crowned at Paris, the war languished on both sides, from their incapacity of exerting fresh efforts. Charles, naturally voluptuous, fond of pleasures, and a slave to beauty, had gladly quitted the fatigues of a camp to indulge his softer passions. His heart, susceptible of love, had found an object supremely capable of exciting it, in the celebrated Agnes Soreille. She was born at the village of Fromenteau, near Loches, in Touraine. Her personal attractions, which are represented by all the cotemporary historians, as the most touching and seductive, were equalled by the delicacy and gaiety of her imagination. She was worthy the lover she possessed, because, during all the unlimited influence which her charms procured her over him, she never forgot he was a king, nor sacrificed his glory and interests to the effeminate gratifications of appetite.

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appetite. On the contrary, when immersed in indolent and supine inaction, she is said to have roused him from his lethargy, and excited him to achievements worthy his birth and dignity *.

The treaty concluded at Arras between

* The year of her birth was about 1409. She had attained her twenty-second year when she first appeared at court, in the service of Isabella queen of Naples and Sicily. From that princess she passed into the train of Mary, Charles's queen. Her favour was during some time closely concealed, and only divulged by the promotion of all her relations to offices and dignities. "Accessit ad stupri suspicionem propin-
" quorum Agnetis ad dignitates ecclesiasticas repen-
" tina promotio," says Gaguin, in his life of Charles the seventh.

Her mind was elevated and noble. She ever attempted to inspire the king with a thirst of glory, and a wish to recover his dominions from the English. Francis the first honoured and cherished her memory. The four elegant lines which that great prince made on her, are well known,

" Gentille Agnes, plus d'honneur tu merites,

" La cause étant de France recouvrer !

" Que ce que peut dans un cloître ouvrir

" Clause Nonain, ou bien devote hermite."

Charles

Charles and the duke of Burgundy, who had long fluctuated in uncertainty, and yielded at length to sentiments of generous forgiveness, was a mortal wound to the English affairs. Isabella, who had been long an object of infamy and public detestation, expired of sorrow and consternation at this unwelcome news *; and the

* Isabella of Bavaria, one of the worst queens who has reigned in France, survived the unhappy Charles the sixth, her husband, about thirteen years. John Boucher, a writer not far removed from the time in which she lived, relates her death very minutely in his *Annales d'Aquitaine*. — “ Incontinent après le
 “ traité d'Arras (says he) Madame Ysabeau de Ha-
 “ viege, veuve du feu roi Charles 6, qui avoit été
 “ longuement entre les mains des Anglois en grande
 “ indigence et pauvreté, fut averti du dit accord et
 “ appointment, et en mouut de douleur en l'hôtel du
 “ roi, près St. Paul à Paris; et fut son corps mené à
 “ St. Denis, et enterré en la chapelle des rois, près
 “ du feu Charles 6 son mari. Elle n'eut que qua-
 “ tres cierges, et quatre personnes à son enterrement.
 “ Ce fut grand' honte aux Anglois, qui l'avoient en
 “ leurs mains, qu'ils ne lui firent aucun honneur à
 “ ses exeques.”

Her son, Charles the seventh, being born at the
 time

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the regent, whose mastery and judicious policy had alone hitherto preserved the declining affairs of his country, in that swift decay to which they apparently hastened, followed soon after.

The Parisians received their native prince into his capital with acclamations; and Charles, after long opposing a sea of

time when her intimacy with Louis duke of Orleans was carried to the greatest length; gave some probability to the report that he was the offspring of their incestuous amours. It is said that even the English, whom she had so highly obliged, at the expence of honour, nature, and affection, were so ungenerous as to reproach her with this humiliating circumstance. Mezerai says, " Ils prenoient plaisir de lui dire en face que le roi Charles n'étoit pas fils de son mari." —Gaguin uses nearly the same words: "Nulla re magis irritata, quam quod Carolum regem, ejus filium incesto concubitu natum Anglus diffamabat."

Her funerals were meaner than those of an ordinary gentlewoman. Her body was carried in a little boat on the Seine to St. Denis, attended only by four persons; and the prior of St. Denis performed the service, not a prelate being present, or any solemnities paid to her remains.

troubles,

troubles, began to taste the pleasures of conquest and tranquillity. The condition of France was, notwithstanding, at this period the most deplorable and wretched. It presented a renewal of the sad scenes which had been exhibited under John, and in the first years of Charles the fifth. A disorder in the provinces, approaching to anarchy.—The calamities of war were followed by the scourge of pestilence and famine.—The foldiery, unemployed during the frequent truces which took place between the two crowns, ravaged the possessions of the defenceless peasants. As yet the regal power was not sufficiently confirmed, to extend any permanent and effectual remedy to these evils; and as Charles appears principally to have resided in the royal chateaus on the Loire, or in Berri, Paris is said to have been so depopulated and abandoned, that the wolves ventured even into the middle of the “rue St. Antoine,” and carried off the children of the citizens.—A circumstance, which if true, indicates

indicates a state of the most dreadful and complete misery !

The passionate desire of redressing these national distresses, induced the king to hold out terms of pacification to the English, neither inglorious or disadvantageous. The two rich provinces of Normandy and Guyenne were offered them, under condition of homage. Sound policy should have induced and dictated a compliance with these cessions — but Bedford was no more. Henry, the weakest prince who ever held a sceptre, meek and superstitious, was ill qualified to guide the helm of state, in conjunctures delicate and critical. The factions of Winchester and Gloucester tore the court ; and the nation, accustomed to triumph in every preceding contest with France, and still supported by the recollection of Henry's and Edward's trophies, knew not how to adopt a temporising and more humiliating tone. Though a suspension of arms was accepted for some years, they did not recede from their

their ancient and ill-founded pretensions on the kingdom.

Meanwhile France saw expire the inveterate animosity and hereditary hatred of the two houses of Burgundy and Orleans. The first of these princes, by an effort of magnanimity and greatness of soul rarely found among men; desirous to bury in oblivion the unhappy dissensions of his father, restored the duke of Orleans, who had languished in a captivity of five-and-twenty years, ever since the battle of Azincourt, to liberty, by paying his ransom, which amounted to the enormous sum of three hundred thousand ecus. They met at Gravelines, embraced, and interchanged a mutual forgiveness.

During the tranquillity of the peace, Charles, occupied in the pursuits of love, in banquets, gardens, and the pleasures of the chase, indulged his natural inclination for these gentler recreations, and forgot the toils of war. The beautiful Agnes possessed an unlimited influence over him.—But destined, like his unhappy

successor, Henry the fourth, after having vanquished his foreign enemies; to find more cruel ones in his own household; fortune had prepared in his son a source of disquietude more sharp and afflictive than any external ones could prove. Louis, the detestable and malignant Louis, his eldest son, had already attained his twenty-second year, though the king was still in the vigour of his age. When only sixteen, he had rebelled against his father, who forgave his misconduct. Such lenity was lost on his obdurate and unfeeling mind. Discontented, and anxious to anticipate his power, he refused subjection, and proceeded to insults the most irritating and criminal.—An incident, which, as it peculiarly marks his character, I shall relate, happened at this time.

A person of the court had offended the dauphin: determined on revenge, he bargained with the count de Dammartin to assassinate him; but the count, being dissuaded from the perpetration of so mean and dastardly a crime by his brother, refused

refused to execute it. The affair came to the king's knowledge, who severely reprimanded his son. Louis, to cover his own guilt, accused the count of having suggested to him the means ; but Dammartin, jealous of his wounded honour, not only denied the accusation in the royal presence ; but offered, according to the laws of chivalry, to justify himself from the imputation, in single combat, against any of the dauphin's train. Charles, whose character was peculiarly open, generous, and candid, saw and abhorred the malignity of his son : he even ordered him to quit his presence, and not appear at court for four months. The dauphin obeyed, but not without menaces ; and retired into Dauphiné, from whence he returned no more till the king's death.

The war between France and England, which had slumbered for several years, at length waked again ; but conquest, which during the beginning of Charles's reign hung dubious, now declared uniformly in his favour. He attacked Normandy,

undertook the siege of Rouen in person, and re-entered it in triumph. The gallant count de Dunois seconded his sovereign's efforts, and in a few months the whole province was finally re-annexed to the crown, from which Henry the fifth had dismembered it.

The pleasure which Charles felt from this important and victorious campaign, was saddened by the loss of his beloved mistress. She expired of a dysentery, at the abbey of Jumieges, near Rouen; to which place she had come to meet the king, and to inform him of a conspiracy against his person. Though the cotemporary authors express themselves with a studied ambiguity on this event, there is great reason to believe that the dauphin was concerned in the plot; and even that Agnes's death was the effect of poison administered by his express command. The king tenderly and passionately lamented her: she was one of the best and greatest mistresses which any of the French princes have possessed. Madame de Villequier,

quier, her niece, by a sort of inheritance in gallantry, succeeded to her place and favour*.

The reduction of Normandy was only a prelude to new acquisitions: the king, animated by his past success, resolved to

* Agnes Soreille was created by Charles the seventh countess of Penthievre, and lady of Beauté sur Marne. She was in her fortieth year when she died; and left three daughters by the king. Charlotte, the eldest, was married to Jacques de Brezé, count de Maulevrier: her death was truly deplorable. She is said to have equalled her mother in beauty; but an attachment which her husband discovered, proved her ruin. Jean de Troyes has related the circumstances of it: they are so affecting that I shall insert them without any alteration:—"Elle étoit allé à la chasse avec lui; à leur retour chacun se retireoit dans son appartement; Brezé fut averti que sa femme s'étoit retirée avec Pierre de la Vergne, son veneur: il prend son épée, fait briser la porte, trouve la Vergne en chemise, et le tue. Sa femme s'alla cacher sous la couverture d'un lit où étoient couchés ses enfans. Il la tira du lit, et lui plongea son épée dans le Sein: elle étoit à genoux; elle tomba morte."—Louis the eleventh obliged the count de Maulevrier to purchase a remission of this crime, by an enormous pecuniary amende.

improve the favourable moment, and to attempt what his grandfather's untimely and lamented death had then prevented—the entire rout of the English, and their extirpation from his dominions. All Guienne and Gascony was still in their possession: the inhabitants, governed during several centuries by them, were affectionate to these foreign masters; and a very vigorous defence might yet have been made—but civil and intestine confusion aided Charles's arms. The bloody quarrel between the contending Roses, which deluged the kingdom with slaughter, was already on the point of commencing. No succours were sent, no timely aid afforded them. Four armies, commanded by the ablest generals of France, entered these provinces, and made a progress the most fortunate and rapid: only one effort was exerted for their preservation by the great Talbot and his son, who perished in the battle of Castillon. Bourdeaux and Bayonne opened their gates to the conqueror; and Charles the seventh, who had acceded to the crown

under

under circumstances the most distressful and deplorable, yet effected what neither the policy or courage of his ancestors had been able to produce.

But if the Monarch was victorious and happy, the Father was destined to experience a different fate. His ungrateful and unnatural son became his most implacable enemy. Several years had elapsed since his departure from court; the king had frequently commanded him to return, but in vain. His conquests over the English had even been impeded, and stopped in the mid-way, by a dangerous insurrection of the dauphin and duke of Savoy. Superadded to this, his exactions and oppressions in Dauphiné, where he exercised a sort of unlimited and royal power, were grown insupportable. Charles, irritated by such disobedience, and weary of his continued misconduct, commissioned the count de Dammartin to seize his person. That nobleman, whom he had formerly affronted in the tenderest part, proceeded instantly to the execution of the mandate;

but Louis, who had received timely intelligence of the design, saved himself by a precipitate flight into Franche Comté, from whence he continued his rout into Brabant.

The duke of Burgundy, either influenced by motives of generosity and courtesy, or from policy, received, and afforded him an asylum. He assigned him a pension of twelve thousand ecus, and gave him the Chateau de Gueneppe near Brussels, for his residence. Here he endeavoured at first to amuse and divert his unquiet mind by the study of astrology, to which he was ever immoderately addicted; but afterwards, with that malevolent duplicity which so strongly marked his character; and in despite of all the benefits which the house of Burgundy had heaped upon him, he attempted to sow the seeds of discontent and quarrel between the duke and his son, the count de Charolois, in which he succeeded but too well.

The king tried in vain by every means to induce the duke of Burgundy to deliver

ver up the dauphin. By a prediction founded on his knowledge of Louis, and justified in his future conduct, he warned him that he was nourishing a serpent, which when warmed would strike his deadly fangs into the bosom of its protector. He even once was on the point of entering Flanders at the head of an army, to seize the rebellious prince; but renouncing his intentions, he determined rather to deprive him of the succession, and to leave the crown to his younger son Charles duke of Berri. It is highly probable he would have effected this design, if death had not prevented him.

During the latter years of his life, Charles had become distrustful, suspicious, and uneasy: he feared the dauphin's vindictive spirit might push him to attempts the most atrocious. While he resided at Meun-sur-Yeure, in Berri, he received repeated informations, that his own domestics had plotted to destroy him. The wretched king, terrified at an intimation so alarming, and not knowing on whose attachment

attachment or fidelity to repose, refused obstinately to receive any nourishment during some days; and when at length, vanquished by the importunity of his attendants, he would have willingly eat, nature was no longer able: he could not swallow any sustenance, and soon after expired.

The character of Charles is infinitely amiable. He possessed all those qualities which conciliate affection, and touch the heart. Courteous, gallant, liberal, amorous, and brave; yet sinking, from natural disposition, and a sort of yielding incapacity, into an effeminate and enervate indolence, which he could not resist; and again emerging into the exertion of all the virtues which distinguish a hero and a prince. Born to experience every vicissitude of fortune, and, after triumphing over his political enemies, to find domestic ones more cruel and unfeeling, he may be accounted a happy monarch, but a miserable individual.

Though attached too closely to his favourites,

favourites, and sometimes led by that attachment into errors, he yet never used his authority with rigour, or oppressed his people by heavy impositions : and his reign, distinguished by the entire extirpation of the English from the dominions of France, is one of those on which their historians peculiarly delight to dwell. The kingdom, long torn by every species of foreign and internal commotion, began to recover ; and, no longer nourishing in its vitals a hostile and powerful enemy, grew more confirmed in its police, more important in the European scale. By a similar progression, the royal power, hitherto shackled and limited from the feudal regulations, acquiring gradually strength, became wider in its influence, and more resolute in its supremacy. In the subsequent reign, it was carried into a despotism the most extensive and uncontrouled.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

Louis the eleventh's character, and commencement of his reign.—Interview with Henry king of Castile.—Louis's violence and oppressions.—League of the public good.—Accession and character of Charles, last duke of Burgundy.—Interview of Peronne.—King's imprisonment, and terrors.—Death of Charles duke of Berri.—Interview with Edward the fourth, at Pecquigni.—Louis's insidious policy.—The duke of Burgundy's attempts on Switzerland.—Battle of Nancy, and death.—Burgundy re-united to France.—Conclusion of Louis's reign.—Cruelties.—First stroke of an apoplexy.—His pilgrimage.—His encreasing severity.—Minute circumstances of his illness.—Death.—Character, —Mistresses.

WE are about to enter on a reign of a very extraordinary and singular nature. A prince odious in his character, detestable

detestable in his conduct ; violating every maxim of honourable or virtuous policy ; deviating frequently even from the rules of interest ; uniformly flagitious, and systematically bad — yet attaining by the mazes of an insidious and eccentric subtlety, to the completion of almost all his views, and acquiring a prerogative and authority unknown to his predecessors. Such is Louis the eleventh ! — The detail of his actions as a king, will prove the justice of the portrait.

So universally abhorred had the rebellion and ingratitude of Louis, while dauphin, rendered him, that a considerable party was already formed in the court of Charles the seventh, for the young duke of Berri : but the count du Maine having sent intelligence to Louis of his father's death, he lost not a moment in profiting of it ; and the duke of Burgundy, long his protector, and now become his vassal, mounting on horseback, attended him, together with his son the count de Charolois, to Rheims, where

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where he caused himself to be immediately crowned.

The opening of his reign was marked with all those changes and alterations customary on the accession of princes; and peculiarly to be expected on that of one who had lived in open discord with the preceding sovereign. Every maxim of government adopted by Charles, was counteracted by Louis; all his officers or favourites degraded with ignominy, and new ones advanced to power; the duke of Alençon, who had been committed to prison for treasonable practices, released, and the count de Dammartin immured in the Bastile: the nobility dispossessed of their charges, and the people loaded with exactions: the duke of Bretagne invaded, and the duke of Berri defrauded of his appennage.

After a commencement so strongly predictive of his future measures, he hastened into Gascony, to an interview with Henry the Impotent, king of Castile. The two sovereigns met at Mauleon, on the confines

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confines of Navarre, and formed a contrast not a little remarkable. Henry, vain, magnificent, haughty, and sumptuous, attended with a splendid train. Louis, with no external marks of royalty; mean in his person; clad in coarse cloth, short and unbecoming: a *notre dame* of lead in his bonnet; and slenderly accompanied. After a fruitless conference, they both retired, with sentiments of mutual contempt.

As he became confirmed in the throne, his character unfolded and developed itself. The labyrinths of a crooked policy in which he trod, made him ever attentive to the means of contracting and diminishing the power of all the great vassals of the crown. Among these, the duke of Burgundy held the first place; the duke of Bretagne the second. With the former he exerted the arts of intrigue; and, by means of a secret correspondence which he kept up in his court, procured the restitution of those towns on the Somme, ceded at the treaty of Arras to Philip, and
which

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which made him master of all Picardy. As this negotiation was effected in contradiction to the sentiments of the count de Charolois, it laid the foundation of that personal hatred which he ever bore the king, and which Louis encreased by the tenor of all his subsequent conduct.

With the latter of these princes, as less powerful, he scarce observed any measures; the mandates he sent him, were of the most despotic and imperious nature; they forbade him to levy any taxes in his duchy, to strike money, or to term himself "duke, by the grace of God." It was, to deprive him at once of all independance, or sovereignty. Francis the second, a weak but generous prince, was at this time duke of Bretagne. Unable to refuse compliance with these haughty orders, he affected to submit to them; while he privately set on foot the means to restrain a power, which threatened the subversion or annihilation of every other.

Desirous to strengthen his proceedings by the shadow of a national concurrence,
the

the king meanwhile assembled the states, and laid before them his pretended reasons for so unparalleled an act of despotism. Charles, duke of Orleans, first prince of the blood, respectable from his age, and beloved for his virtues, presumed to oppose and disapprove his measures; but the unfeeling Louis reproached and reprimanded him in expressions so cutting and severe, that the duke, unable to survive this humiliating treatment, died of grief and mortification only two days after. His death did not obliterate his conduct, or soften the heart of his obdurate sovereign: it was perpetuated in a breast which never forgave, and knew no emotions of tenderness, respected no ties of consanguinity. The family of Orleans had pretensions of the justest kind on the duchy of Milan, in right of Valentina, mother of the deceased duke; but Louis, so far from espousing these claims, allied himself with Francisco Sforza, who had usurped the dominions on the extinction of the house of Visconti, and secured him in possession of them,

from motives of hatred to the princes of his own blood.

These reiterated and increasing acts of violence and oppression, produced in the end a general convulsion. The first nobles, roused by past indignities, and apprehensive of future ones more intolerable, took up arms against the author of them. The count de Dunois, grown grey under the late king, and universally revered, appeared at the head of his vassals: the count de St. Pol, and the duke of Nemours, were joined by Dammartin, escaped from his imprisonment. The duke of Bretagne prepared to enter France with an army; the duke of Berri fled to him for an asylum; and the count de Charolois, at the head of a considerable body of forces, directed his march straight to the capital.

In this alarming concurrence of circumstances, the genius of Louis, active, penetrating, and peculiarly calculated to extricate him from difficulties, eminently appeared. On the first news of the conspiracy, he fell immediately on the weakest leaders,

leaders, and reduced them to implore his clemency. The apprehension that his enemies might take possession of Paris, obliged him to grant it; and he was on his way to secure that city, when the Burgundian army meeting him at Montlhery, an action unavoidably ensued. It was indecisive; but the king, anxious for the preservation of the metropolis, and distrustful of the attachment of its citizens, first dislodged, and re-entered Paris. Compelled by the necessity of his affairs, he bent with all the pliability of address, adopted manners the most engaging and popular, courted the wives of the mechanics, promised a repeal of every onerous or extraordinary impost, and extended several acts of grace to retain them in allegiance.

Meanwhile the Breton army having joined the count de Charolois, formed a prodigious assemblage of troops: they assumed the title of the League for the public good; and directing their course towards the capital, encamped in the sur-

rounding villages. After vainly attempting to gain possession of it by blockade, or famine, or intrigue, and no insurrection taking place, terms of accommodation were proposed. Louis, who knew that this powerful combination could only be successfully reduced by effecting its disunion, complied with all their demands; resolved only to adhere to them, while compelled to it by force. He yielded therefore, though with infinite reluctance, the duchy of Normandy to Charles his brother; invested the count de St. Pol with the sword of constable; restored the towns upon the Somme to the count de Charolois; and replaced the other chiefs of the confederacy in all their lands and offices. The league thus broken, each member of it returned into his own dominions or castles; while the crafty king, only waiting for the favourable moment, held himself in readiness, to improve it to the utmost.

The insurrections of the Flemings against the house of Burgundy, and the
discontents

discontents of the Normans with the administration of their new duke, who suffered himself to be governed by weak counsellors, gave Louis that opportunity which he so anxiously desired. Vigorous and rapid in his movements when occasion demanded it, he first compelled the duke of Bretagne to abandon his brother; and then depriving the defenceless prince of his newly ceded duchy, forced him to fly a miserable refugee to his ally for shelter. The duke of Burgundy, broken with years and infirmities, could extend no protection to his friends in person; and his son was occupied with the rebellious Liègeois. They endeavoured to rouse the king of England in their quarrel; but Edward the fourth was as yet not sufficiently confirmed in the throne, to undertake a foreign war; and Louis, triumphant over so many enemies, and rendered stronger by their opposition, grew more tyrannical in his conduct, more oppressive in his government.

At this time Philip duke of Burgundy

died in a very advanced age. His justice, beneficence, and paternal attention to his people, obtained him the surname of "the Good." Superadded to these amiable qualifications, the extent of territory he possessed, and the splendid munificence of his temper, ranked him among the greatest princes of his time. The count de Charolois his son succeeded him.—Of fiery and impetuous manners, bold even to temerity, inflexible in the prosecution of designs he had once adopted, aiming at royalty, and exhausting his revenues in vain attempts to extend his dominions; Charles, over-reached in policy by the king of France, and unequal to the vast projects he had conceived, destroyed the fabric which his three predecessors had erected, and expired the victim of his immoderate ambition.

Though Louis, from the prompt and immediate seizure of the occasion to attack the dukes of Bretagne and Berri, had gained the ascendancy, yet this advantage was only temporary. Charles of

Burgundy, his inveterate enemy, was returned victorious from Flanders, and had re-inspired the opposition of his two allies, by leading a powerful army to their assistance.

The king, wary and cautious, trusting no event to fortune which wisdom or subtlety might regulate; and like Philip of Macedon, believing no fortrefs impregnable where a mule laden with silver could enter, attacked the duke first with gold, and bought a truce at the price of one hundred and twenty thousand ecus. As this however procured only a suspension of hostilities, and desirous of detaching him altogether from his connections, he determined on a personal interview: relying on his own powers of persuasion, and duped by his vanity, Louis named Peronne as the place of their meeting. Willing at the same time to give the duke an incontestible proof of his perfect confidence in his honour, he came without any guards, and only attended by two or three noblemen of his court. Charles re-

ceived him with every mark of honorary distinction, and lodged him in the town; but several Burgundian and other foreign persons of rank arriving, who were his avowed enemies, he began to entertain some apprehensions respecting his safety, and requested the duke to assign him apartments in the castle, as more secure from insult or injury. By this step, still more imprudent than the first, he rendered himself absolutely a prisoner.

Previous to the interview, the king, whose grand object was ever to keep the duke of Burgundy employed in domestic wars, had sent agents privately to Liège, to induce them to resume their arms, by a promise of his protection. He did not expect the consequence of this message to be instantaneous; but the Liégeois impetuous and violent, no sooner received the intimation, than they broke out into open rebellion, massacred their governors, and committed a thousand excesses. When Charles received this intelligence, he became furious with resentment. Perfectly conscious

conscious at whose instigation it had been commenced, he denounced vengeance against the perfidious monarch, ordered the castle gates to be closed, and even debated whether he should not put him to immediate death.

Louis, naturally timid and irresolute, in the hands of his mortal enemy whom he had deeply offended, surrounded with people who detested him, and shut up in a chamber at the foot of that very tower where Hebert, count de Vermandois, had formerly caused Charles the Simple to be murdered, underwent by anticipation all the horrors of death. The duke kept him three days in this painful suspense; during which time, the king, whose subtlety forsook him not in so dangerous a crisis, found means to engage some of his attendants in his interests. He was released; but under conditions the most ignominious and humiliating. Charles obliged the king to accompany him with three hundred men at arms to the siege of Liège, which he took by storm, punished with

with extreme severity their disobedience ; and then dismissing his sovereign, whom he had compelled to be a witness of all these transactions, he scarce deigned to accompany him half a league on his way, and bid him adieu with a sort of haughty civility.

There is no incident of Louis's reign, no action in his conduct, so apparently contradictory to his character, as his behaviour in this celebrated interview : his sagacity and his cautious temper bordering on fear, seem equally to have forsaken him ; and the prince of his age the most crafty and political, suffered himself to be over-reached by one the least endowed with those qualities.

Among the articles to which the king was reduced to submit while at Peronne, he had promised to cede Champagne and Brie to his brother ; but as the vicinity of these provinces to the Burgundian dominions rendered it highly hazardous, and would have infallibly secured the alliance between the two dukes ; Louis no
 sooner

sooner effected his escape, than he exerted every engine of dexterity to prevail on his brother to accept Guyenne in exchange. The young prince, weak, and yielding to the affected demonstrations of kindness shewn him, complied with the proposal; but convinced when too late of the error he had committed, and allured by the hopes of a marriage with Mary of Burgundy, Charles's only daughter, and heiress of his vast possessions, he began to renew his confederacy with him, and to raise troops.—His death, marked with every appearance of poison, and the evident interest which Louis had to perpetrate this crime, superadded to the personal hatred he bore the duke, conspired to render him justly and universally suspected of the fact *. Guyenne was immediately

* The duke of Berri appears to have been an amiable prince, but of slender capacity. Alternately the slave of devotion and of love, he was governed by his confessor or his mistress, according to his predominant weakness. The latter prevailed; and

mediately seized, and re-united to the crown.

The news of this deplorable and unexpected event no sooner reached the duke of Burgundy, than all his indignation and resentment revived. He entered Pi-

and the lady of Montfibreau triumphed over the abbot of St. John d'Angeli. Jealous of this pre-eminence, and bent on revenge, the monk caused a peach to be poisoned, which he presented to the lady. She divided it with a knife, and giving half to her lover, eat the rest herself: the consequence was immediately fatal, and she expired in great agonies. The duke, from the strength of his constitution, resisted the poison, during some time; though he lost his hair and nails which came off, yet he lingered near six months, and then died at Bourdeaux. The abbot fled; but being seized in Bretagne by order of Francis the second, the reigning duke, he was carried to Nantes; it was intended to bring him to a public trial, in the hope and expectation of his accusing Louis the eleventh, as his accomplice or abettor—but on the morning appointed to conduct him before the judges, he was found dead in his cell, strangled and lying on the floor. As by this catastrophe, a veil was drawn before the whole affair, it was commonly believed that the king had not hesitated to conceal the first crime by the perpetration of a second.

cardy

cardy with an army, determined to revenge his unhappy ally, to whose manes he sacrificed every inhabitant who fell into his power; but having failed in an attempt on Beauvais, and exhausting his forces by efforts of a vain and impotent frenzy, rather than of a manly vengeance, he was soon under a necessity of accepting the truce which Louis offered him. This latter prince, uniform and systematical in his movements; ever attaining his ends by those means which seemed most remote from their object, grew every year more despotic, and added some new acquisition to the regal prerogative or authority: he seized on the territories of the count d'Armagnac, committed the duke of Alençon to prison, and retained the duke of Bretagne in his subjection.

While Louis thus aggrandized his house, the duke of Burgundy, whom a fatal passion for extending his dominions had intoxicated, began that train of errors and misconduct which terminated in his fall. Instead of watching with circum-
spection

spection the minutest actions of his perfidious and powerful neighbour ; he engaged in a quarrel with the whole Germanic body, by laying siege to Nuiz on the Rhine, under pretexts the most insufficient, and even persisted in it to the destruction of his whole army, without success.

In the mean time, Edward the fourth, having vanquished all the partizans of the house of Lancaster, and established himself in the throne, began to turn his view to the recovery of those possessions, to which every king of England since Edward the third had laid claim. Endowed with martial qualities, successful in every war where he had personally commanded, and yet in the vigour of his age, he seemed capable of renewing the laurels won at Azincourt. Invited by the pressing and repeated importunities of the duke of Burgundy, he landed at Calais ; but his ally, engaged in the siege of Nuiz, and pertinaciously adhering to his design, after detaining him some time, appeared unattended

tended and single, instead of bringing, according to promise, a powerful body of troops. Edward however advanced into Picardy, in the expectation that the constable St. Pol would, as he had promised, surrender into their hands the town of St. Quintin; but the count, by a double piece of treachery, deceived his allies, and gave Louis time to avert the storm.

The subtle king had recourse to artifice and negotiation, his usual engines; he knew that the decision of arms was ever hazardous and uncertain; that of intrigue, more sure and unfailing. Edward, voluptuous and indolent, lent an easy ear to these proposals; an accommodation was soon managed, and a peace signed, notwithstanding Charles's opposition, at Amiens. The two monarchs in consequence agreed on an interview at the bridge of Pecquigni, near that city. A grated barrier was erected on the middle, and two boxes raised for the purpose. Louis, whose pliant genius accommodated itself to every situation of politics, and
 who

who thought no submissions too mean for the attainment of his views; flattered the English prince, invited him with all the apparent cordiality of friendship to his capital, and at the same time secured by presents the principal nobles in his interests.

Edward returned to England; the Burgundian, compelled by necessity and weakness, accepted a suspension of arms; and the constable, whose perfidy had rendered him obnoxious to every party, was given up by Charles into the king's hands, who after a hasty trial, caused him to be condemned for treason, and instantly beheaded.

Untaught by the ill success which had attended all his plans of ambition and greatness, the duke of Burgundy persisted in the pursuit of them. He engaged in a dispute with the Swiss cantons, nor would hearken to the humble and repeated instances they made to him for peace. These virtuous and hardy people, who had purchased their freedom by the boldest opposition

opposition to Austrian tyranny, and who cherished amid their lakes and mountains the warmest attachment to it, resisted his invasion with determined courage; and after having defeated him in two engagements, obliged him to renounce his enterprize with ignominy.

Still bent on conquests, and driven almost to madness by his repeated disgraces, he laid siege to Nancy in Lorraine, though with only three thousand men, and amid the rigours of winter. René duke of Lorraine attacked him with superior forces. At the first shock, the count de Campobasso, a Neapolitan, on whom he had conferred unnumbered favours, basely withdrew with four hundred horse which he commanded; and at the same time, by an act of unparalleled ingratitude and villainy, left twelve or fifteen men about his person, with strict command to assassinate him in his flight. They executed the detestable commission but too faithfully; and the unhappy duke was found dead, pierced with three wounds. — It is not

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certain what motive influenced Campobasso to perpetrate so foul a crime on his benefactor. It is said, that Charles had once struck him, and that revenge stimulated him to it; but history has not clearly elucidated this point*.

Thus

* Campobasso had been banished from Naples, on account of his adherence to the Angevine faction in that kingdom. From whatever source his hatred to the duke of Burgundy originated, he carried it to the most flagitious pitch, since he certainly offered Louis the eleventh, repeatedly, to deliver up to him his master alive or dead. The king, how little scrupulous soever to circumvent his enemies, abhorred so black a treachery, and even sent Charles intimation of the design—but the infamous opinion which he entertained of the person from whom this information came, made him neglect and despise it. “If,” said he, “it were true, the king would never have “imparted to me so important a secret.” He even redoubled his marks of confidence and attachment to the perfidious Neapolitan.

His body, though carefully sought for, could not be discovered, after the action, till Campobasso sent an Italian page, who pointed out the spot where he fell, which was at some distance from the scene of battle. The duke was entirely naked, lying on his belly,

Thus fell the last male of the great house of Burgundy. Mary, his only daughter,

belly, and his face close to a piece of ice of the marsh where he had expired. He was wounded in three places : one, by a halberd, which had split his jaw ; the two others were made by a pike ; the first having pierced both his thighs from side to side, and the last entered a little higher. The duke of Lorraine caused him to be transported to Nancy, and laid on a bed of state, in an apartment hung with black velvet. He afterwards paid him the customary funeral honours, which were of a most singular nature.—René wore on that occasion a golden beard reaching to his middle. Previous to his scattering holy water on the corpse, he advanced up to the deceased prince, and taking him by the hand, addressed him in these words—“ God rest thy soul ; thou hast given us much trouble and grief !”

Charles's errors and vices seem to have been more pernicious to himself, than injurious to others. He possessed many sublime and shining qualities ; among which his undaunted intrepidity, liberality, application, and magnificence were peculiarly eminent. He was of a middle stature, and vigorous frame of body, capable of great fatigue. The lineaments of his countenance were harsh and displeasing ; his physiognomy appearing to indicate the fierceness of his natural disposition.—These circumstances of the

daughter, who had not yet attained her twentieth year, was unable to assert her title to the ample possessions which devolved to her. The imprudence and misfortunes of her father had left the state exhausted and impotent; the treasury empty; a council dismayed and feeble; troops almost exterminated.—In this dis-

duke's character and death are chiefly borrowed from Cominés.

The "*Chronique scandaleuse*," written by John de Troyes, agrees with the last-mentioned historian in almost every particular, and adds some others not less curious.—"Charles's body," says he, "was distinguished from the others that lay near it in the same state of nakedness, by six marks, which infallibly ascertained his identity. The first was, the want of his upper teeth; which had been beaten out by a fall; the second was, a scar on his throat, occasioned by a wound he received at the battle of Montlhery; the third, his great nails, which he always wore longer than any of his courtiers; fourthly, another scar on his left shoulder; the fifth was, a fistula on his right groin; and lastly, a nail of his foot that grew into his little toe.—His physician, chaplain, and gentlemen of his bed-chamber recognized their master by these marks."

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treffed situation, she implored the protection of Louis; she submitted herself and her dominions to his pleasure; she even pressingly requested, that by a marriage with a prince of France, her territories might be re-united to the crown in all their branches.—The conduct of the king to the young princess, on this occasion, was equally destitute of magnanimity, as of true policy. To the former sentiment he was ever a stranger; but nothing, except his unrelenting detestation of the Burgundian race, and that eccentric, peculiar path in which he delighted to tread, could have induced him to prefer the hostile seizure of a part of her dominions, to the tranquil and undisputed possession of the whole. Such was however the alternative he chose! His army immediately rendered themselves masters of Burgundy almost without opposition.

The unprotected duchess, whose condition, so justly exciting of compassion, could not soften the malignant heart of Louis, was necessitated, after a number of delays

and irresolutions, to accept the hand of Maximilian, son to the emperor Frederic; who was by no means capable of recovering her dismembered territories from so powerful an antagonist. The king of England was bound by every principle of generosity and wisdom, to assist and support her declining fortunes; but Louis, subtle and provident, had precluded this channel of succour, by a promise of the dauphin to Edward's eldest daughter, tho' without any intention of fulfilling it: and after some feeble and ineffectual efforts on the part of Maximilian, all Burgundy and Artois remained to France.

As Louis advanced in years, the vices of his nature growing inveterate, obtained the fullest command over him. The despotism which he had established, leaving no barrier to his authority, unveiled and gave full scope to that implacable cruelty which characterised him through every stage of life. He had preserved an unceasing desire of vengeance against the duke of Nemours ever since the war of the Public Good;

Good ; and was now determined to gratify it. That unfortunate nobleman, dreading his sovereign's resentment, had retired to the fortress of Carlat, among the mountains of Auvergne. Louis sent the Seigneur de Beaujeu, to whom he had married his daughter Anne, with orders to invest him in it ; but the inaccessible situation of the castle rendering it very difficult to gain possession by force, the duke received the most solemn assurances of safety, if he would surrender. Reposing on the honour of his enemy, he complied : but the king, who sported with all the ties of virtue and society, caused him, in violation of his compact, to be carried to the Bastile ; he then compelled, though with difficulty, the reluctant judges to condemn him, and ordered him to be beheaded. Nor did his revenge stop there ; but, by a refinement in cruelty unexampled, he commanded the two sons of the duke, yet in early childhood, and of consequence incapable of any participation in treason, to be placed directly under the scaffold, and covered with

the blood of their miserable father, which descended on their heads.

These are recitals at which humanity shudders; but what shall we say to the universal testimony of the French historians, and even of Cominés himself; who assure, that during his reign, he put to death more than four thousand persons by various species of torture, without even the forms of trial; and that he usually was present himself at their executions, in which spectacle he tasted a barbarous satisfaction? Scarce do the frantic excesses of Caligula surpass those of Louis in atrocity or number. Happily we draw towards the termination of this tragic drama.

While every public and private prosperity seemed to attend on the king, and no foreign or internal commotion disturbed his schemes, death prepared to arrest him. He was at a village near Chinon in Touraine, when a stroke of an apoplexy seized him: he lay two days motionless and speechless; at the end of which time, his voice and intellects returned, but not the health

health he had previously enjoyed. Rendered more distrustful by this symptom of approaching dissolution, and jealous lest from any personal incapacity, attempts should be made to infringe his authority; he redoubled his vigilance and timid circumspection. As the duke of Bourbon appeared to be the only prince who possessed the qualities requisite for such a pretension, he seized, without accusal or pretext, on all his lands; and even endeavoured to invent crimes by which he might ultimately ruin and put him to death.

Amid these occupations, a second apoplectic seizure again warned him of his end. To avert the impending calamity, he made a pilgrimage to St. Claude in Franche Comté: his devotion and his cruelty both increased; he was attended in this mock pilgrimage by six thousand men at arms, and left bloody traces of his rout in almost every place through which he passed.

So far from relaxing his accustomed severity, as he approached the verge of life,
his

his temper hardened into a sterner barbarity. His wife, whose patient and enduring attachment, whose mild and silent virtues, merited a better treatment, he banished into Savoy, after having kept her during many years shut up in some one of the royal castles; where he rarely visited her, and in which she resided as a simple individual, without state, and almost without attendants. By his last will, he expressly precluded her from any share in the government, and endeavoured to inspire his son with sentiments of distrust and aversion to his mother.

The young dauphin he held as a sort of prisoner in the castle of Amboise, where he saw none except valets and persons of the meanest condition. No education, no instructions were infused into his early mind, from a dread, that such information might awaken his dormant qualities, and induce him to make attempts against the government.

His treatment of Louis duke of Orleans, first prince of the blood, was similar,

lar. He carried him with him a captive wherever he moved; and, by one of those abominable strokes of unnatural policy which discriminate Louis the eleventh from any other monarch, he obliged him to marry the princess Jane, his youngest daughter; though she was deformed, in a great degree, and had not even received a decent education. She was besides only twelve years of age, and the duke only fourteen. This union of force and compulsion was afterwards broken by Louis, when he ascended the throne*.

Besides

* There are some circumstances so curious and extraordinary, relative to this marriage, that I cannot dispense with mentioning them. It seems that the king was fully convinced his daughter could bear no children, since, in a letter of his to the count de Dammartin still extant, he says, speaking of the future bride and her husband,—“ Qu'ils n'auroient pas beaucoup d'embarras à nourrir les enfans qui naissent de leur union; mais cependant, elle aura lieu, quelque chose qu'on en puisse dire.”

Louis the twelfth pretended that he never consummated the nuptials; but this, on many accounts, is highly improbable, though admitted by pope Alexander

Besides these instances of domestic tyranny, the people groaned under his oppressions. Numbers of the nobility were carried about as wild beasts, confined in iron cages; a horrid invention, unknown before this reign, and the frequency of which increased with the progress of his disorder. A third stroke, of a similar nature with the two former, seemed to promise his kingdom a termination of its evils; yet he still survived for new severities.

The death of Charles of Anjou at this juncture added Provence to the crown; and that of Mary of Burgundy, who pe-

der the sixth, at the subsequent dissolution of them. St. Gelais de Montlieu, in his history, expressly asserts the contrary: these are his words—“ C’est grand
 “ merveille de ce qu’on faisoit au duc d’Orleans, et
 “ les menaces qu’on lui faisoit s’il ne s’acquittoit de
 “ coucher avec la dite dame Jehanne. On ne le
 “ menaçoit de rien moins que de la vie; et j’aurois
 “ grand honte de reciter la façon comme on usoient
 “ ceux qui étoient autour, tant hommes que femmes.”
 —All this plainly bespeaks the consummation of their marriage.

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rished by a fall from her horse in hunting, during her pregnancy*, opened the way to a pacification between Louis and Maximilian, by the affiance of his infant daughter Margaret with the dauphin Charles.

Edward the fourth expired much about the same time; and England by that event, was once more plunged into all those convulsions and civil broils, from which she had hardly begun to recover.

The concluding scenes of Louis's life hold up one of the most awful pictures

* Cominés says, she died of a fever consequent to, and occasioned by her accident. The cotemporary authors assert, that her exquisite modesty and delicacy alone made the fall fatal; since she preferred death to the permitting a surgeon to set her thigh, which was broke.

Her subjects deeply regretted her loss.—She had rendered herself universally beloved for her affability, liberality, and faithful attachment to her husband.—Lord Rivers, brother to Elizabeth Woodville, Edward the fourth's queen, had been among the number of her suitors; but was refused, as of a rank too much beneath the princess.

which

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which can be presented to the imagination. That of Pygmalion, though heightened by the colours of Fenelon's rich and descriptive pen, is not more tremendous, or more affecting. He exhausted every power of medicine, or devotion, or artifice, to prolong a miserable and hateful existence. To inspire him with gaiety, the most beautiful country girls were brought to dance round his house, and bands of men who played on lutes accompanied them. To intercede with Heaven in his behalf, processions were ordered throughout the whole kingdom for his recovery; and public prayers offered, to avert the Bize, a cold, piercing wind which incommoded him extremely. A vast collection of relics was brought, as if to secure him by their influence from the stroke of death; while his physician treated him with insult, and extorted from him vast sums of money; which the king dared not to refuse him in those circumstances. It is even pretended, that a bath of infant's blood was prepared for him, in the expectation

pectation that it would soften the acrimony of his scorbutic humours; but to this we may lend a very slender faith.

After changing his place of residence many times, he sat down at the castle of Pleffiz-les-Tours. The walls were covered with iron spikes; a guard of cross-bow men watched night and day, as if to secure him from invasion. He heard enemies in the passing wind: every thing terrified and alarmed his guilty mind. Only one wicket admitted into the castle; and scarce any one approached his person, except the lady of Beaujeu his daughter, and her husband. During these dismal circumstances, he yet tried to persuade himself and others that he might live. In this flattering delusion, he sent to seek a Calabrian hermit, eminent for sanctity, named Francisco de Paolo. He threw himself on his knees before this monk; besought with humble supplications his interest with the Deity for the prolongation of his life; built him two convents, as proofs of his zeal; and knew no bounds to his adu-

lation and respect for the supposed minister of Heaven.

Finding however the inevitable hour of fate advance, and unable longer to turn his eyes from the survey of it; he sent for Charles, his son, from Amboise, and gave him some salutary advice, exactly opposite to the uniform tenor of all his own conduct—to cherish the princes of the blood; to govern by the advice of his nobles; not to controvert the established laws; and to diminish the exorbitant imposts with which he had burdened his subjects. This was the concluding act of his life: he expired some days after.

Those who are conversant in the great works of antiquity, will be strikingly reminded, on the perusal of this story, of the description of Tiberius's exit, as related by Tacitus. It seems marked with all the same strokes of character.—

“ Jam Tiberium corpus, jam vires, non-
 “ dum dissimulatio deserebat. Idem a-
 “ nimi rigor, sermone ac vultu intentus,
 “ quæsitâ interdum comitate, quamvis
 “ manifestam

"manifestam defectionem tegebat; multatque sæpius locis, tandem apud promontorium Miseni confedit."

After so minute and diffuse a narration of Louis the eleventh's conduct and death, it will be needless to draw the character of the king with equal accuracy. The principal strokes of it cannot be mistaken. His virtues, if he can be said to have possessed any, were those of policy and artifice: his vices, of disposition and the heart. Even his understanding, though clear, sagacious, and discerning, was frequently so fine and subtle, that it misled him by its own cunning, and overshot his purposes. France however continued to rise in the scale of empire. Charles the seventh laid the foundation of this aggrandisement, by his expulsion of the English. Louis added Burgundy, Artois, and Provence to the crown. Only Bretagne remained, of the great fiefs, unannexed.

The malignant and unamiable character of Louis did not prevent him from some

gallantries. History has preserved the names of several successive mistresses to whom he was attached. Margaret de Sassenage is the most known and celebrated: she died before his accession to the crown: but we never find that any of them influenced the king, or assumed the least command over affairs of state. By his first wife, the princess Margaret of Scotland, he had no issue; nor does it appear that he even consummated the marriage, or cohabited with her, on account of some secret defect in her person *. His queen, Charlotte of Savoy, an amiable woman, only survived him three months.

I have

* She was daughter to James the first, and only eleven years old when married to Louis, then dauphin, at Tours. What the peculiar object of her husband's disgust and aversion was, seems covered up very mysteriously, and is hard to ascertain. Most of the contemporary authors assert, that her breath was very disagreeable, and that from that cause arose his estrangement to her. Cominés only says, Louis never loved her; without assigning the reason.—She was an accomplished princess in other respects, and protected

I have permitted myself to run into a greater prolixity on this reign, than I generally intend—possibly greater than was requisite. I mean to interest, rather than instruct; and this end can only be attained by an enumeration of those seemingly trifling circumstances; which yet often display the picture of human nature with more fidelity, than the greater actions of the monarch, obscured by the veil of policy.

letters. A singular anecdote is related of her, strongly corroborating this.

Passing accidentally through an apartment where Alain Chartier, the most brilliant genius but the ugliest man of his age, lay asleep, she advanced up to him and kissed him—Her ladies reproaching her by their looks for this seeming violation of female modesty; “It was not the man,” said she, “whom I kissed, but the mouth from whence have proceeded so many elevated sentiments.”

She died at Chalons-sur-Mane, about five years after her marriage, without issue; and, as the French authors inform us, of grief for the calumnious imputations affixed on her honour.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

Accession of Charles the eighth.—Character of the regent, Anne, lady of Beaujeu.—Her administration.—Attempts on the duchy of Bretagne.—The duke of Orleans's intrigues and flight.—His imprisonment.—Marriage of Anne of Bretagne to the king.—The duchy united to the crown.—Termination of the regency.—Charles's opening character.—He is inflamed with schemes of conquest.—Attack on the kingdom of Naples.—Romantic expedition.—His march—Uninterrupted train of victory—Coronation—Return.—Battle of Fornoua.—Charles abandons himself to pleasures.—Naples lost.—New plans of invasion.—Renounced.—The king's change, and sudden death.—Circumstances of it.—Character.

THE age of Charles the eighth, at his accession to the crown, was of that critical nature, which rendered it difficult to provide for the regulation of the state.

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He might be reputed a major without any considerable violence to the forms of the monarchy, since he had nearly completed his fourteenth year;—but the meanness of his education, the confinement to which he had always been subjected, and his feeble constitution, delicate and sickly, seemed to demand some abler and more experienced conductor. The late king, whose views ever piercing and active foresaw this necessity, had not failed to apply to it a remedy. In his expiring moments he nominated Anne, his eldest daughter, to the first charge of the government, though with the title, not of regent, but of governess.

The princess had received from nature all the qualities requisite for this high office. A genius equal to her father's: more uniformity of conduct, and greater magnanimity of mind. Her judgment was sound, without any mixture of that perfidious duplicity which debased the understanding of Louis. Though vindictive, not cruel; though tenacious of her

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dignity,

dignity, not violent or imperious. Led by no inferior passions, she felt her capacities for administration, and sacrificed sovereignly to this pursuit. Mistress of eloquence, and address the most refined, she knew how to possess, and to retain the authority delegated to her.—Such are the bold and vivid colours under which the cotemporary writers have transmitted to us her character; and we find them fully expanded and displayed during the short but vigorous period, when she possessed the supreme command of affairs.

But though talents so various and exalted appeared to justify the confidence reposed in her by Louis the eleventh, equity and uniform prescription seemed to call Louis duke of Orleans to the helm of state. His rank, as first prince of the blood, and even presumptive heir to the crown, rendered his claim incontrovertible; if his unripe age, which exceeded not twenty years, did not diminish the force of this plea. Anne knew how to avail herself of the defect; and, by an exertion
of

of that dexterity and management which she so eminently possessed, secured to herself, notwithstanding the duke's opposition, the post with which she had been invested.

Her first acts were of the most ingratiating and popular nature. Several creatures, rather than ministers, of the late king, who had abused their favour, by the commission of crimes the most enormous, she surrendered up to public punishment. She revoked the donations which his superstition and terrors of approaching death had induced him to make to several convents and monastic orders; and conciliated universal favour by a mild and equal government. These were however only the inferior operations of the cabinet. Anne, more daring and intrepid than her father, saw that the favourable moment was at hand, to reunite Bretagne to the crown of France; nor was deterred from the prosecution of her plan, by the obstacles which environed it.

Francis the second, sunk into years and imbecility, had resigned all power into the hands of Landais; whom an insinuating and flexible genius, calculated to rise in courts, had promoted from a mechanical occupation, to the disposal of all his master's favour. The Breton nobility, incensed at so unworthy a choice, and irritated by the acts of oppression and violence which he committed, endeavoured to effect his fall; but the duke, attached to his favourite, sheltered him from their indignation. Landais, not content with an escape, was desirous of revenge: he menaced his enemies, and even proceeded to the execution of his threats. Necessity, united to the desire of vengeance, forced them to recur for protection to the French ministry; and Anne, who only waited for the application, was ready to grant their requests of assistance; when some opposition which she met with from another quarter, compelled her to turn her views that way, and relinquish for an instant her project.

Though

KINGS OF FRANCE, &c. 121

Though the superior address and policy of his rival, had obliged the duke of Orleans to acquiesce in her nomination to the first post of state ; yet his disappointed ambition, in so important a struggle, had tended to nourish in his bosom an animosity to her ; and his temper, open, and incapable of disguise, made him careless or inattentive to its concealment. An incident small in itself, but attended with very important consequences, displayed his resentment, and hastened the reduction of Bretagne.

The court was at Melun. The duke of Orleans and some other young noblemen were engaged in a party at tennis, of which the king and his sister were spectators : a dispute arising relative to a stroke which involved the decision of the game, it was referred to them. Madame de Beaujéu hesitated not to pronounce in the duke's disfavour ; who, incensed at what he apprehended to be an act of flagrant injustice, and the result of personal enmity, was so imprudent as to say, in a tone of voice by
no

no means inaudible, “ Que quiconque
 “ l’avoit condamné, si c’étoit un homme,
 “ il en avoit menti ; et si c’étoit une
 “ femme, que c’étoit une putaine.”—This
 affront, which was of the grossest nature,
 became unpardonable, when offered to so
 great a personage, and in the royal pre-
 sence. Anne, mistress of her indignation,
 restrained it so far as not to order his im-
 mediate arrest : but she procured from the
 council an order for that purpose, which
 would have been carried into prompt exe-
 cution, if the duke had not secured him-
 self by flight, and assembled his partizans
 and vassals for his defence. It was vain.
 She besieged him in Beaugency on the
 Loire ; reduced him to terms of absolute
 submission ; and left him no other autho-
 rity than that which his rank alone pro-
 cured.

Louis, though impatient of a yoke so
 galling, was not in a condition to shake it
 off ; he even affected an entire acquies-
 cence : but Anne, jealous and vigilant, hav-
 ing received information that he had en-
 tered

tered into some negotiations with the duke of Bretagne, sent him an order to repair instantly to the king ; and, on his attempting by a messenger to excuse himself under frivolous pretexts, commanded the marchal de Gié to conduct him to her. The duke obeyed, and began his journey : but having gone out next morning, under pretence of trying some new falcons, he escaped a second time, and gained the territories of his ally Francis ; who promised him his daughter Anne, heiress to the duchy, in marriage, and entered into the closest connections with him.

The nobility of Bretagne, who had incensed their prince by the destruction and death of his favourite Landais ; apprehensive of a severe chastisement by this accession of strength, implored protection from the lady of Beaujeu. She marched instantly a considerable army to their rescue ; and, after several inferior advantages, gained the celebrated battle of St. Aubin du Cormier, which decided the contest. The duke of Orleans, who fought on foot,
and

and behaved with distinguished courage, was taken prisoner. After a short confinement at the castle of Lusignan in Poictou, he was conducted to Bourges, where he remained a captive in the great tower above two years.

The successes of the French arms obliged Madame de Beaujeu to unmask, and declare openly to the Breton nobility, who pressed her to withdraw her troops, that it was now no longer time. An avowal so declaratory of the intention to annex the duchy for ever to the crown, re-united every disaffected person, and restored to the duke his rebellious nobility. But Francis, overcome with infirmities, and hurt by a fall from his horse, expired at this juncture; and left his daughter Anne, scarce thirteen years of age, surrounded with dangers and enemies.

New factions, and new competitors arose for this rich alliance.—The Seigneur d'Albret had several partizans. Maximilian, who had been married to Mary of Burgundy, aspired to her hand: nor was
the

the duke of Orleans's party, if he had not been detained a prisoner, yet extinct. The young princess decided in favour of the archduke; and the marriage was not only solemnized by proxy, but attended with a singular and curious ceremony; that of the count de Nassau's introducing his naked leg into the bed of the bride, as representing the person of Maximilian. Had he come himself in person, as every principle of policy dictated, the union would have been rendered indissoluble; but the abject, and almost incredible parsimony of the emperor Frederic, his father, who refused him the inconsiderable sum of two thousand ecus, on this great occasion, deprived him of an acquisition so important.

The French council, fearful lest the prize should be lost amid so many intrigues and delays, determined to send back the princess Margaret of Austria, to whom the king had been long betrothed, and to demand Anne of Bretagne for Charles the eighth: but though

pressed by the most urgent necessity, and invested by the forces of the sovereign who courted her alliance, she disdained to violate the faith she had once pledged; and refused, with a noble perseverance, to accept any husband except the one she had already chosen. Attacked however on every side, and even entreated by the duke of Orleans, whom Charles took from prison, and sent to urge his suit; and on the other hand, disgusted by the coldness and tardiness of the archduke, who did not manifest the anxiety or impatience which such a match might justly excite; the young duchess yielded at length, and the nuptials were celebrated at Langeais in Touraine. Maximilian exclaimed loudly against this double infringement of the most solemn and binding institutions; but the evil was irremediable, and the last great fief swallowed up in the dominions of France.

Henry the seventh of England, who had acted, from motives of avarice, a part similar to that which Edward the
fourth

fourth had taken in the affairs of Mary of Burgundy, rather affected to make, than really made, an effort for the preservation of the duchy. He landed at Calais; but was soon induced to retire into his own dominions, by an argument irresistible with a prince of his character—I mean gold.

With the important acquisition of Bretagne, may be said to have terminated the authority of Anne de Beaujeu. Her credit and influence had begun previously to diminish. The young king, who approached to years of manhood, manifested too great an impatience of controul, to be longer held in tutelage; and his character expanding with his age, rendered him known to his people. No resemblance of his father appeared in Charles. Lively and brilliant, but of feeble judgment, he possessed a temper the most amiable and gentle; a heart which even power could not corrupt to the commission of a crime. Fond of pleasure, though easily inflamed with the love of glory,

glory, he sacrificed alternately to both, and resembled his grandfather, Charles the seventh, in the rapid transitions he made from one to the other.

During the interval of tranquillity and repose which succeeded to the reduction or union of Bretagne; the courtiers, desirous of ingratiating themselves with their sovereign, began first to dazzle his imagination with ideas of fame and conquest. The pretensions which, as successor to the house of Anjou, he had on the kingdom of Naples, formed a plausible and flattering theme to a youthful mind. Charles possessed the personal courage requisite for military exploits. Ludovico Sforza, surnamed the Moor, brother to the celebrated Francisco, and uncle to the reigning duke of Milan, Galeazzo, invited and importuned him, from interested motives, to come and take possession of his right. Upon the first report of such an intention, Ferdinand, who reigned in Naples, and who had passed his seventieth year, sent an embassy to the king, of the most submis-

five nature, offering to pay homage, and an annual tribute. These proposals, which ought to have been accepted, were instantly refused; and the old king, terrified at the impending invasion, and unable to avert it, expired soon after of grief and terror.

The rage for foreign war having once gained possession of the young monarch, no arguments or motives of policy could induce him to relinquish it. In vain did the lady of Beaujeu oppose so rash and ill-concerted an enterprize. She had lost her former influence, and was no longer heard. With such warmth was this injudicious determination adopted, that even the most important and certain acquisitions were renounced; for a contingent and distant crown: Roussillon and Cerdagne, of which Louis the eleventh had possessed himself during the troubles of Spain, by an unwearied and masterly policy, were ceded to Ferdinand of Arragon, only to obtain his neutrality in the attack on Naples. None of the absurd and legendary adventures

tures of chivalry were ever more romantic, or undertaken in greater contradiction to reason, than this of Charles. Without money, without any certain or honourable ally, and with a handful of troops courageous and gallant, but unaccustomed to the fatigues of long or disastrous campaigns; he undertook to march over the Alps and Apennines, to the extremity of Italy, through the dominions of the pope and Florence, who were openly declared against him.

After a number of delays and procrastinations, unavoidable at the commencement of such an enterprize, Charles began his march. While he waited at Asti in Piedmont for his artillery, which was obliged to be dragged over the mountains, he was seized with the small-pox; from which he recovered after the most imminent danger of his life. At Turin he was necessitated to borrow all the rings and jewels of the duchess of Savoy, as he did at Casal those of the marchioness of Montferrat, to supply the necessary charges

of the war. Ludovico Sforza met him at Vigevano, but quitted him in a few days, to take possession of the duchy of Milan, which he seized on the death of Galeazzo; his nephew, though he had left an infant son. If Charles had pursued the dictates of sound policy, he should himself have conquered Milan, which belonged of right to the family of Orleans; but, intoxicated with his Neapolitan schemes, he continued his progress.

The Florentines, who passionately aspired to freedom, expelled Pietro de Medecis on the king's approach to Tuscany; and received him in military triumph into the city. Clad in complete armour, mounted on horseback, his lance couched, and his vizor lowered, he entered Florence as a conqueror. Alexander the sixth, the reigning pontiff, retired, at this tremendous intelligence, into the castle of St. Angelo, after he had commanded the gates of Rome to be thrown open; and Charles, victorious without a blow, took possession of the city as by right of conquest, and dis-

posed of his troops in the different quarters of it.—The pope soon capitulated; and after a treaty such as the necessity of his affairs reduced him to conclude, the French army quitted Rome, and resumed its march.—Meanwhile all was consternation and affright at Naples. Alfonso, who had succeeded to his father in the throne, yielding to terrors the most unmanly, and almost inconceivable, resigned the sceptre to young Ferdinand his son, and fled into a monastery at Messina in Sicily *. The new king

* If we may credit the historians, Alfonso's panic rose to a degree approaching frenzy. Such were his fears, that though the French army was sixty leagues distant, he apprehended he saw them in the streets of Naples, and that the very walls, trees, and stones, cried out, "France!" The queen-dowager imploring him only to remain three days, which were wanting to complete a year from his accession to the crown, he refused; and even threatened, if he was longer detained against his inclination, to precipitate himself from the windows of the palace. After having caused his son Ferdinand to be solemnly crowned and inaugurated, he embarked on board a vessel; carrying with him all sorts of wines, and seeds for his gardens,

king was defeated in a sort of engagement which he hazarded, and obliged to shelter himself in the isle of Ischia. Naples instantly received the victor; the castles held out a

gardens, to both which pleasures he was immoderately attached. Landing in Sicily, he retired into a convent at Messina; and abandoning himself to superstitious and monastic austerities, soon contracted by those rigors an excoriation and gravel, which terminated his existence, within a year from Charles the eighth's invasion,

Cominés describes him as a monster of impiety and cruelty. Some circumstances of his oppressions and enormities, which he enumerates, are very singular. "Both himself and his father Ferdinand," says he, "were accustomed to deliver out hogs to the people to fatten, and if any of them died, they were obliged to repay the king. He indulged himself in the commission of every species of lasciviousness and barbarity: sold the bishopric of Tarento to a Jew for thirteen thousand ducats; and gave abbies to his falconers." Cominés, with a sort of sacred horror, sums up the list of his iniquities, by declaring, that "he never kept Lent, or even pretended to do it; and would neither go to confession, nor receive the sacrament." These were the most flagitious excesses of which the human mind could conceive an idea, in the fifteenth century, and seemed to eclipse all his other vices.

very short time; and of the whole kingdom, only Brindisi continued to declare for Ferdinand.

Dazzled with so extraordinary a blaze of glory, Charles already meditated the sack of Constantinople, and the subversion of the Ottoman empire. Every thing yielded to his arms; and during so long and difficult a march, scarce an enemy had appeared to oppose his passage.—But amid this train of prosperity, he did not advert to the gathering storm. Plunged in the festive excesses of youth, and flushed with conquest, no steps were taken to secure the dominions he had acquired. Banquets and masquerades succeeded each other; and to so great a degree of neglect was their misconduct carried, that troops were not even sent to receive the places which submitted, and acknowledged the French monarch.

The great powers of Europe, who had looked on, during this rapid subversion of Italy, unmoved, began to awake from their supine inaction. A league was made
between

between the pope, the emperor Maximilian, the archduke Philip his son, and Ferdinand of Arragon: even the perfidious Sforza, violating the ties of gratitude and honour, acceded to this powerful confederacy.

It became necessary for Charles to meditate a retreat. He determined on it, after having previously made a triumphal entry into the capital of his new kingdom, clad in the imperial ornaments, a globe in his right hand, and a sceptre in his left; while a canopy was supported over him by the first nobles of the country, and all the people cried, "Long live the most august emperor!"—This ostentatious ceremony performed, he quitted Naples; and passing again through the papal territories, was so imprudent as to lose twelve or fifteen days at Pisa and Sienna, during which time the great confederate army assembled. Louis duke of Orleans, who ought to have led eight or nine thousand men to the assistance of his sovereign, had engaged in an attempt against

Ludovico Sforza; and having surprised the city of Novarra, was afterwards blocked up in it.

The allied army, though four times more numerous than that of the king, did not venture to attack him among the mountains; but waited for him near the village of Fornoua, nine miles from Placenzia, in an open plain. The courage of the French, animated by the presence of their prince, was superior to all opposition: they gained the day, pursued their march towards France, and reached the city of Ast with laurels unwithered.—The duke of Orleans continued still shut up in Novarra; but Charles at length marching to his relief, extricated him with difficulty from his perilous situation, the garrison having sustained the extremest pressures of famine.

The king had not sufficient patience to attend the conclusion of a treaty in agitation with Sforza; but, quitting the fatigues of a camp, returned in haste to Lyons, and once more abandoned himself

self to love and pleasures. All the hasty
 and imperfect trophies he had acquired,
 were soon forgotten. A decay in the af-
 fairs of Naples, as rapid as the conquest
 of it, rendered abortive all his labours.
 Ferdinand, more worthy of a diadem
 than his father or grandfather, returned
 to the kingdom from which he had been
 driven. The duke of Montpensier, left
 viceroy, after a long and obstinate attempt
 to retain possession of it, was not only
 obliged to surrender himself and his troops
 prisoners of war, but to capitulate for
 the complete evacuation of the whole
 kingdom in a month : and the other com-
 manders refusing to acknowledge or exe-
 cute so ignominious a treaty, he was sent,
 together with the forces which he com-
 manded, to Puzzoli ; where a malignant
 distemper destroyed both himself and the
 greater part of his unhappy countrymen.
 Ferdinand, a prince of high expectations,
 died likewise at this critical juncture, before
 the reduction of his dominions was ef-
 fected ;

receded; and his uncle Frederic succeeded to the throne *.

Meanwhile new plans of invasion were set on foot in the court of France. The king, in compliance with the superstitions of the age, went to St. Denis, to take leave of the holy saints and martyrs who repose there. The cavalry even passed the mountains, and the duchy of Milan was fixed for the scene of their first attack; when all these preparations were suddenly stopt and laid aside. It is pretended, that Charles's attachment to one of the queen's maids of honour, occasioned this extraordinary change: but it is more natural to attribute it to the decay of his health; which, impaired by his excesses with women, and

* Ferdinand had only just married his own aunt, a beautiful young lady of fourteen years, as Cominés assures us. She was the legitimate daughter of his grandfather Ferdinand, and of consequence sister to the late king Alfonso, his father. He expired of a dysentery and hectic fever, in a little town at the foot of mount Vesuvius.

originally delicate, began to fail. The duke of Orleans was so sensible of this apparent decline, which left the succession open to him, that he refused to take upon him the command of the army destined against Milan; and every appearance of war was totally relinquished.

The king, whether conscious that his pleasures had been productive of very injurious consequences to him; or whether, from motives of conscientious scruple, renounced all his past irregularities; and retiring with the queen, to whom he was exceedingly attached, to the castle of Amboise, amused himself with making some additions, and erecting new apartments there. Relinquishing the ideas of foreign conquest, he began to provide for the internal tranquillity of his kingdom; and was occupied in these regulations, when a death equally sudden and singular, put an end to his intentions.

He was in an old gallery at Amboise, from whence he surveyed a game of tennis,
which

which was played in the fosses of the castle. Willing to gratify the queen with the same entertainment, he went to her chamber, and taking her by the hand, conducted her to the gallery; but in passing through the door which opened into it, he struck his head with violence against the top, which was very low: he felt no immediate bad consequences from the accident, but entered. He even had entirely forgotten the blow, and was engaged in deep conversation with Jacques de Resli, bishop of Angers. It turned on religious subjects; and the king, who had entirely renounced the debauches in which he had indulged during the first years of his marriage, was professing his determined resolutions to guard sacredly the fidelity he owed to the queen, when he suddenly fell backwards in an apoplectic fit. The courtiers and attendants, terrified at so alarming a seizure, immediately laid him on a small pallet-bed, which by accident was in a corner of the gallery; and on which, notwithstanding

withstanding every effort of medicine, he expired at eleven o'clock the same night *.

The instant he had breathed his last, every one quitted his body; and leaving him in the place where he died, galloped in haste to Blois, to announce to the duke of Orleans his accession to the crown: while Anne of Bretagne, overcome with grief, and very strongly attached to her husband, abandoned herself to all the distraction of sorrow. It is said she sat in

* Philip de Cominés says, the king thrice recovered his voice, but quickly lost it again, as the confessor who waited by his majesty assured him. He calls the distemper of which Charles expired, a catarrh or apoplexy; and adds, that the indications of his approaching end were apparent to the physicians for three or four days before his seizure. Yet they entertained hopes that the disease would only fall on his arms, of which he would probably lose the use. Some of the French historians have notwithstanding pretended, though without any shadow of proof, or probability, that he was poisoned with an orange. It is more natural to apprehend that his irregularities enfeebled his constitution, and accelerated his end.

a corner of her chamber during two days, constantly refusing any nourishment, and lost in despair. Perhaps her mortified ambition might, in some degree, cause so immoderate a distress, as by Charles's death she saw herself again reduced from queen of France to duchess of Bretagne; the two sons which she had borne him having both lived a very short time.

The strokes of Charles's character are few and simple. He was surnamed the Affable and the Courteous; nor is it known that in his whole life, he ever offended or disgusted any one of his servants or subjects. His temper was sweet, and yielding to excess; open to generosity, humanity, and benevolence. — In person he was little, and ungraceful; his shoulders high, his face plain, and his speech slow and interrupted*: his eyes alone were lively and expressive. Cominés's description

* Brantôme takes some pains to contradict this idea of Charles the eighth, and even produces the testimony of his grandmother, the seneschale of Poitou, who

tion of him is wondrously forcible, though laconic.—“Petit homme de corps, et peu entendu; mais si bon, qu'il n'est point possible de voir meilleure créature.”

There is a certain unadorned naïveté in the picture, which charms and affects.

Though Charles's passion for women was excessive, and is even supposed to have conducted to hasten his death; yet we do not find any particular mistress who appears to have attached him long, or obtained any extraordinary ascendancy

who had been a lady of honour under the duchess of Bourbon (Anne de Beaujeu) and consequently knew the king's person perfectly. She described him as having a handsome and engaging face, and though low and slender in his person, yet well made and agreeable.

If the effigy in bronze at St. Denis, where he is in a kneeling attitude, may be supposed to resemble the king, it confirms Brantome's assertion; who accuses Guichiardini of malignancy, in belying and depreciating his person, in revenge for the calamities he had introduced into Italy. Francis the first cherished a peculiar veneration for, and affection to the memory of Charles the eighth.

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over him. His capacity was limited, and rendered more so by the mean and confined education which he received in the castle of Amboise during his father's life; but the virtues of his heart, his observance of justice, and unbounded benignity of disposition, rendered him the most amiable of princes. Two of his domestics are said to have died of grief for the loss of their beloved master. He had not completed his twenty-eighth year, when death deprived his people of so good a king.

In him ended the direct race of Valois; Louis duke of Orleans, who ascended the throne, being of a collateral branch, and grandson to the first duke of Orleans, brother to Charles the sixth, assassinated in the rue Barbette at Paris.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

Louis the twelfth's accession and character.—

His divorce, and marriage with Anne of Bretagne.—Conquest of Milan, and imprisonment of Ludovico Sforza.—Recovery of Naples, and division of it with Ferdinand of Arragon—Perfidy of that prince.—Gonsalvo de Cordova drives out the French.—Magnanimity of Louis.—His dangerous illness.—Death of Isabella of Castile.—Julius the second's accession to the papacy.—Character.—League of Cambray.—Death of the cardinal of Amboise.—Julius's ambition and successes.—Gaston de Foix appears.—His victories.—Battle of Ravenna.—Death—Circumstances.—French driven out of Italy.—Julius dies.—Leo the tenth accedes to the pontificate.—Illness and death of Anne of Bretagne.—Her character.—The king's grief. Marriage of Francis count d'Angoulesme to the princess Claude.—State of the court.—

Louis's marriage.—Illness.—Death.—Character.

L OUIS the twelfth had attained his thirty-sixth year at the time when he acceded to the crown of France. His judgment, naturally clear and discerning, was ripened by experience; and his heart, full of every gentle and beneficent sentiment, was rendered supremely capable of feeling the calamities of others, by those which he had undergone himself. Under Louis the eleventh he had been treated with cruel and unmerited severity, compelled to a marriage the most odious, and denied all the privileges of his rank. Under the succeeding regency, fortune persecuted him with even greater rigour; and the error he committed in appearing in arms against his sovereign at the battle of St. Aubin du Cormier, was fully expiated by a long and rigorous imprisonment, which succeeded. The forgiving and clement temper of Charles the eighth had released him from this captivity, but he

he was notwithstanding ever regarded with a sort of jealous attention; and was in disgrace with the late king at the time of his decease, on account of an unintended affront which Anne of Bretagne resented highly*.

The first acts of his administration were consistent with his character, and unveiled fully that virtuous integrity, and magnanimous superiority to revenge and retaliation of injury, which uniformly ap-

* The nature of this undesigned injury was very extraordinary. The young dauphin Charles was dead; and the physicians finding that the king's mind was much affected by so melancholy an event, advised some recreation to divert his grief, which might otherwise prey on his feeble constitution. The duke of Orleans, in this design, appeared at a masquerade in the castle of Amboise; and exerted himself to an unusual degree, in a dance, with a lady, which he carried to a pitch of gay extravagance. It produced the very opposite effect to that which he expected; for the queen interpreting all these marks of levity and mirth to his pleasure at the dauphin's death, which rendered him again presumptive successor, was exceedingly offended, and obliged him to leave the court, and retire to the castle of Blois.

peared in his conduct. He lightened the imposts from off his people; and when pressed by the courtiers to punish those who had been his enemies and avowed opponents, he made that glorious reply worthy of eternal remembrance; "It be-
 " comes not a king of France, to revenge
 " the quarrels of a duke of Orleans."

Though bent to recover the kingdom of Naples from Frederick the new sovereign, and equally determined to assert his title to the duchy of Milan, usurped by Ludovico Sforza; a domestic concern, which entailed with it very important consequences, claimed his early attention. The princess Jane, to whom he had been married more than twenty years, though endowed with the most estimable and amiable qualities, was not only incapable of producing children; but the deformity of her person rendered her an object of distaste and aversion. On the other hand, Anne of Bretagne had retired into her duchy; and though the articles of her marriage with Charles the eighth, were

such as precluded her from the disposal of her hand in case of his death, to the injury of the state; yet policy required the strictest regard to those measures which might secure to the crown so rich an acquisition. She was beautiful in her person, though a little lame in one foot; yet in early youth, and had not only been beloved by Louis during the lifetime of her father Francis the second, but it was supposed had not been insensible to, or unaffected by his passion. These conjoined motives of the monarch and the man, induced Louis to apply to Alexander the sixth for a dissolution of his marriage: and the pope, whom political principles rendered subservient to any purposes or views, immediately appointed commissioners, and sent his son Cæsar Borgia into France, to decide the affair. They pronounced the union void and illegal, as having been effected by force: and the king, hastening to Nantes, at which city Anne resided, espoused her solemnly, and conducted her to Blois, where he com-

monly held his court. Jane, submissive in her disgrace, and humble from a consciousness of her personal demerits, scarce attempted any resistance to the mandate which deprived her of a crown; but retreating to Bourges, devoted her remaining days to piety, and having founded an order of monastic seclusion, took the veil in the nunnery she had erected.

This affair transacted, the king directed his whole attention to Italy, and principally to the Milaneze. His claim was incontrovertible, in right of Valentina his grandmother; and this was rendered more apparent by the crimes and usurpation of Ludovico Sforza. After having concluded an alliance with the Venetians, his forces entered Piedmont; and meeting scarce any resistance, made a rapid conquest of the whole duchy, only the castle of Milan holding out a few days. Louis, on this prosperous intelligence, hastened across the mountains, entered the capital of his new dominions habited in the ducal robes, and remained there near three months.

Sforza,

Sforza, who bent beneath the storm, and had early retired into Germany, waited only the favourable moment to return; at his approach, every city opened to him its gates, and he was received again into Milan, from whence he had fled. This faint gleam of success was quickly followed by a sad reverse. The Switzers whom he entertained in his service, by a perfidy which even Sforza's character could not justify, delivered him up to the French general, disguised as a common soldier, under which appearance he had hoped to effect his escape. He was conducted to Lyons, where Louis then resided: but Sforza's repeated and flagitious enormities had steel-ed his bosom to the impressions of commiseration or pardon; and without deigning to admit him to his presence, the king removed him immediately to the castle of Loches in Touraine. At first, his confinement was very rigorous, and it is pretended, that he was shut up in an iron cage; but during the latter years of his life, this severity was mitigated; he had permission

to hunt, and a degree of liberty allowed him.

The complete reduction of all the Milaneze which followed Sforza's captivity, and the terror which Louis's arms spread through Italy, rendered the conquest of Naples almost certain: but his weakness in admitting Ferdinand the catholic to divide the spoils which he might have entirely appropriated, was eventually subversive of all his acquisitions. Previous to the attack, a convention was made between the two princes, by which Naples and the northern half of the kingdom was assigned to France; Ferdinand had Apulia and Calabria. Frederic, the reigning king, made no abler defence than his predecessors: after a timid and irresolute opposition, finding himself reduced from royalty to the condition of an individual; and abandoned by all his subjects or adherents, he took the resolution to throw himself on Louis's bounty. He demanded a safe conduct into France, which was granted him; and the king, with that generosity which eminently

eminently shone in his conduct, afforded him an asylum, and an annual pension of thirty thousand ecus, which was continued even after the expulsion of the French from Naples.

Meanwhile Ferdinand was not less diligent in securing his share of the Neapolitan territories. Gonsalvo de Cordova, the celebrated general, whom history has dignified with the title of “the Great Captain,” made an easy conquest of the two provinces decreed to his master. Tarentum only made resistance. Alfonso, the heir to the crown, and son of Frederic, was shut up in it. His father, supposing it impregnable, had sent him to this fortress under the care of two nobles attached to his interests: they apprehending every thing lost, and reposing on the solemn promises of Gonsalvo, who swore on the sacraments, to leave the young prince his perfect liberty, capitulated, and surrendered the place: but the perfidious Spaniard, who sported with oaths, and disregarded the most binding compacts, detained Alfonso prisoner,

prisoner, and sent him to Ferdinand, who though he treated him with lenity, never would release him.

Scarce was Naples reduced under its new masters, when dissentions arose between them, on the subject of a small tract of country claimed by both. The Spaniards first infringed the peace by acts of open hostility; but the king having commanded to repel force by force, his general the duke of Nemours took the field, and pushed his advantages over the Spaniard to such a length, that he was reduced to retire into Barletta, where the want of ammunition had nearly compelled him to surrender. At this juncture, when Louis was on the point of dispossessing Ferdinand of all his division, and fortune had uniformly attended on his arms, Philip the archduke, who had married Jane the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabel, passed through France: he saw the king at Lyons, and concluded a treaty with him in the name of his father-in-law. By the conditions of it, the two monarchs were bound

bound to a cessation of arms; the provinces originally ceded to each were confirmed, and the lands in dispute were to be sequestered into the hands of the archduke.

In the conduct of the princes after this event, we trace in the strongest manner their opposite genius and character. The ambassadors of Ferdinand who attended Philip, having sworn to the execution of the agreement, under pain of excommunication if violated or infringed, the heralds announced it to the two commanders in Naples. The duke of Nemours, who knew the uprightness and integrity of his king, hesitated not a moment to withdraw his forces: but Gonsalvo, hardened himself to the commission of crimes, and reposing with full security on the base and treacherous perfidy of Ferdinand, refused to act in compliance with the orders; he demanded an express command to that purpose. Having received a reinforcement of Germans, he in turn attacked the French, routed them in two actions, killed the duke of Nemours, and not only
made

made himself master of the city of Naples, but totally subdued the whole kingdom.

The archduke was in Savoy when he received the news of so notorious a breach of that public faith, for which he had pledged his own honour. Shocked at a conduct which marked its author with indelible infamy, he returned instantly into France to put himself into Louis's power; while he dispatched messengers to remonstrate with his father-in-law on his treacherous connivance and approval of Gonsalvo's misconduct, and demanded the restitution of all he had conquered. Ferdinand, wrapping himself in the duplicity of an equivocating and crooked policy, one time disowned his ambassadors, and at another his general, offered to restore the kingdom to the captive Frederic, but secretly sent orders to push the war in Naples to the absolute extermination of the French.

Louis, great in his own virtue, and scorning these despicable subterfuges, ordered the ministers of the king of Arra-

gon

gon to quit his dominions; and while, incapable himself of mean retaliation, he permitted the archduke, unmolested, to return into Flanders, though he might have detained him, he made that animating speech to him at his departure.—“ If,” said he, “ your father-in-law has been
 “ guilty of a perfidy, I will not resemble
 “ him; and I am infinitely happier in
 “ the loss of a kingdom which I know
 “ how to reconquer, than to have stained
 “ my honour, which I could never re-
 “ trieve.”

Irritated by a treatment so unkingly and detestable, Louis made new, but ineffectual efforts to regain his rights in Naples. Gonsalvo, the ablest commander of his age, defeated all his attempts; and retained by military skill and superior parts, the possessions which he had acquired by a breach of every principle of faith.

The death of Alexander the sixth, and the accession of Julius the second to the pontificate, was likewise unfavourable to the affairs of France; and the ill success
 which

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which from every quarter seemed to overwhelm him, threw the king into a violent fever, produced by anxiety and mortification. During the height of his distemper, as his death was apprehended to be imminent and inevitable, Anne of Bretagne, provident for her own safety, began to prepare for a retreat into her duchy; and in that intention, embarked a number of rich moveables in boats upon the Loire. The marechal de Gié meeting them between Saumur and Nantes, gave orders to stop their progress; thinking it an act contradictory to the interests of the state, that the queen should remove at pleasure all her jewels and effects out of the kingdom.——Louis recovered; and Anne, enraged at what she deemed an action of the most presumptuous insolence, vindictive to excess, and in a capacity to revenge severely the marechal's conduct, not only procured his exile from the court, and deprivation of every post he held; but pushing her vengeance to a length the most unjustifiable and cruel,

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reduced him to extreme poverty, and left him to terminate his miserable days amid disgrace and indigence.

Frederic, the unfortunate king of Naples, expired about this time at Tours, in a mild and honourable captivity. His death was followed by that of the great queen of Castile, Isabella; and her dominions devolving to the archduke Philip in right of Jane his wife, changed the whole scale and system of European politics. Ferdinand, who after several vain and fruitless efforts to retain the regency, was again reduced to his original kingdom of Arragon, reconciled himself with the king of France; and married his niece Germana de Foix, in hopes of issue which might exclude his grandchildren from the possession of the two thrones.

Julius the second's character, who had ascended the papal chair, though less flagitious than that of his predecessor, was not less opposite to the genius of that religion under which he held the highest place. Haughty, ambitious, warlike, splendid,

did, and enterprizing, nature had designed him for the helmet, not the tiara, and formed him to shine in camps, rather than in conclaves. Politically ungrateful, and sinking the priest and the individual in the prince, he forgot the protection which Louis had extended to him under Alexander's pontificate, when he found a refuge from his generosity. Jealous of his retaining a power in Italy which, might be fatal to the little potentates among whom it was divided, he exerted all the powers of his turbulent and restless genius, in exciting enemies to the French; and unrestrained either by the sanctity of his character, or advanced period of life, he did not scruple to appear in arms, and lead on his troops in person.

The archduke Philip's sudden and unexpected death again restored to Ferdinand the administration he had lost. As he was in Italy when this event happened, an interview took place at Savona between him and Louis the twelfth. The former's terrors left the king of France should

should oppose his designs on the regency of Castile, was his concealed motive to it. They again renewed their alliance, and swore to the strict observance of the articles of peace, but Ferdinand, who knew no principle of public or private fidelity, and only sacrificed to his interested views, disregarded and violated every condition on his return into Spain.

The great league of Cambray followed soon after. One cannot but consider with astonishment mingled with indignation, an union of the two greatest kings in Europe, the emperor, and the pope, against a small, though opulent republic. Louis was guilty of a still greater error, in allying himself with his three inveterate and natural enemies, Ferdinand, Maximilian, and Julius, against the Venetians, his only sure and firm ally beyond the mountains. The battle of Ghiera-d'Adda, gained over Alviano their general, reduced the state to the verge of ruin, and had the emperor improved the deplorable circumstances of

their defeat with celerity, Venice herself had probably been swallowed up by this prodigious confederacy. She averted the final blow, but could never retrieve her former lustre or extent of territory; and Louis, who was rather influenced by resentment than political motives in this affair, had but too much reason to repent the error he had committed, during the future part of his reign.

The death of the cardinal of Amboise, first minister of state, was another loss to the kingdom. He was one of the most virtuous and disinterested statesmen, of whom any history has made mention. Equally a stranger to pride and to avarice; a cardinal, with only one ecclesiastical benefice, and solely occupied by the interests of his sovereign and his country, he was lamented with their grateful fears.

Julius the second, bent on the aggrandizement of the papacy, and the expulsion of the French from Italy, no longer observed any measures with Louis: while the king, actuated by scruples of a timid

superstition, forbid his generals to make incursions on the lands of the church; and spared the pontiff from reverence to his character. Emboldened by this treatment, he proceeded to the greatest lengths of tyranny and inordinate ambition. Desirous of annexing Ferrara to the patrimony of St. Peter, he ordered his general to lay siege to Mirandola, though in the midst of a most severe winter, and though by no shadow of equity could he justify the attempt. The advances not being made with that rapidity he expected, he repaired thither himself; appeared in the trenches at seventy years of age, encouraged and exhorted his troops to the attack; and on its surrender, caused himself to be carried into the city in military triumph, through the breach in the wall.

Roused by these acts of violence and hostility, the king at length sent orders to Chamont to spare the pope no longer. The commander, in consequence, pressed his holiness so vigorously, that he obliged him to retire to Ravenna; and would

have compelled him to terms of pacification, had he not been seized at this juncture with a mortal distemper. Touched with horror at the crime he had committed, in bearing arms against the holy father; and yielding under the pressures of approaching death, to all the weakness of abject superstition, he sent to implore his forgiveness and absolution. The operations of war stood still, and Julius had time to recover. Fortune, which was not so favourable to him as the influence of religious prejudice, soon however reduced him again to a situation the most perilous and critical: he apprehended his degradation from the papacy; and saw Rome itself exposed to the army of the king, without any capacity of defence. He was even on the verge of recurring to Louis's generosity, and opening a treaty with him; when having received advice, that, tired with the scruples and importunities of the queen, he had forbid his general to attack the territories of the church; he resumed his wonted haughtiness,

ness, revoked his intentions of peace, and prepared himself for new campaigns.

In this century, when the minds of men, cultivated and enlarged by learning, expanded by philosophy, and divested of prejudice or the slavery of prescription, presume to view objects as they are by the steady light of reason; we are amazed at the weakness of our ancestors: and survey with mingled wonder and indignation, an Alexander or a Julius, revered amid a thousand enormities; and exerting a tyrannical sway over the cabinets of princes, or conduct of generals, by the sole terrors of their sacerdotal office, unaccompanied with any virtues, or even the appearances of morality and decorum.

Unrepressed by age and ill success, the pope meditated fresh schemes of conquest. Louis, the virtuous, the merciful, and the good, was the constant object of his animosity. He entered into an alliance with Ferdinand the most faithless of princes, against him; and Venice acceded to

the league, which was named by a mockery of religion, "the holy." They took Brescia, and besieged Bologna—when Gaston de Foix appeared. This young hero, nephew to the king, had scarce attained his twentieth year. Louis fondly loved him; and discerning all the fire of military genius in him, entrusted to his supreme command the army in Italy. His first exploits not only justified the choice his uncle made, but elevated him to a rank above all the captains of his age. During the height of the siege of Bologna, he entered the city amid a prodigious fall of snow unperceived by the assailants, who covered with confusion, instantly retired from before it. He lost not a moment in pushing his advantage; defeated the Venetian commander who opposed his march towards Brescia; and attacking their entrenchments with only six thousand chosen soldiers, put eight thousand of the enemy to the sword, and totally drove them from the surrounding country. These splendid successes were soon

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soon followed by the great battle of Ravenna. Gaston triumphed over the army of the confederates; but, like Gustavus Adolphus, he expired in the arms of victory. His own ardour and youthful impetuosity of valour were the causes of his lamented death. Desirous to render the glory of the day complete, he pursued with a small troop, a body of four thousand Spaniards, who retreated in good order. They surrounded him; and he was killed after having combated with the most heroic courage, pierced with twenty-two wounds. The Italians regarded him as a prodigy, and he was surnamed "the thunder-bolt of Italy," from the violence of his movement, the rapidity of his progress, and the suddenness of his extinction*.

Louis

* Brantome enumerates several minute circumstances, preceding and accompanying his death. The action was already gained, when the celebrated Chevalier Bayard, seeing the young prince covered with the blood and brains of a soldier who had been killed close to him, rode up, and demanded, if he was wounded? "No," replied Gaston, "but I have

Louis was greatly affected at his nephew's untimely fate; and the sequel proved

"wounded many of the enemy." Bayard implored him on no consideration to quit the main body of the army; and to prevent his troops from pillaging, while he pursued himself the flying squadrons. This wholesome and wise advice was overborn by the young hero's martial fury. A Gascon runaway having informed him, that a body of Spaniards not only maintained their ground, but had repulsed some of his own forces; he instantly charged them in person, crying out, "Who loves me, follows me."—This body of veterans were advantageously posted, near a piece of water: they discharged their harquebusses, and then lowering their pikes, received firmly the attack. Gaston's horse was first killed, and he himself overborn by numbers; only about twenty gentlemen had accompanied him, among whom was Lautrec, afterwards so renowned under Francis the first, in the wars of Italy. He was of the house of Foix, and nearly allied by blood to Gaston, whom he defended with the most heroic bravery—crying out, when no longer able to ward off the blows aimed at him, "Spare the general, brother to your queen Germana, and you shall have immense ransom!"—No exclamations or intreaties could however save the prince; and Lautrec himself fell by his side, covered with wounds, and left upon the plain.

proved how much the affairs of war depend on one man. The animating spirit which diffused life and vigour, was extinct; dissensions arose in the victorious army, no longer united under one great chieftain. Julius, who overcome with dismay, was ready to implore the clemency of the king, was re-encouraged by Ferdinand and the Venetians. A series of disastrous circumstances succeeded each other, and ruined the French affairs: instead of giving law to all Italy, as might have been expected; they experienced a sad reverse.

The Switzers breaking in upon the Milanese, almost destitute of defence, reconquered it, after a subjection of twelve years, and replaced Maximilian Sforza in the duchy. Genoa revolted, and created

as dead. Bayard was almost driven to madness when on his return he learned his general's fate; and into so great a consternation were the French thrown by this unexpected disaster, that, had the enemy rallied and returned to the charge, they would infallibly have been defeated;

a new

a new duke. Henry the eighth of England, excited by the artifices of his father-in-law Ferdinand, sent to declare war against France; and Maximilian basely deserting all his engagements, went over to the opposite party, and even formed a new alliance with the pope. The king of Arragon, improving the opportunity which this union of so many powers afforded him against Louis, attacked the little kingdom of Navarre, and soon reduced it to subjection. Superior force, and a bull of Julius posterior to the conquest, were the only pretexts which Ferdinand could employ, for this cruel outrage on a prince unarmed, and who had never rendered himself obnoxious to his displeasure. The king of France made every effort to replace him on the throne, and even sent an army into Navarre, but without success: he was engaged with too many enemies, who attempted to overpower him on all hands.

The death of Julius seemed to promise better fortune in Italy. Leo the tenth, a name

a name renowned in arts and liberal science, opened his short, but memorable reign. New efforts were made upon the Milanese in alliance with the Venetians. Sforza was driven to the last extremities by the French forces; only Como and Novarra persisted to hold out—but all these laurels withered in less time than they had been gathered; and after the loss of an engagement, where all the Gascon infantry was hewn in pieces, scarce could la Tremouille, wounded in the leg, conduct the cavalry in safety back to Savoy.

Meanwhile, Henry and Maximilian uniting against Louis, joined to attack Picardy; and the Switzers, elate with the advantages they had gained, entered Burgundy, and laid siege to Dijon, with two-and-twenty thousand men. By means of a treaty humiliating though necessary to France, these latter enemies were induced to return into their own country: but the king of England and the emperor gained the battle of Guinegate, took Tournay, and

and spread terror through all the neighbouring provinces. Louis, though shaken by such a concurrence of calamitous accidents, supported with magnanimity the shock: but wearied by the supplications of the queen, and hoping that Leo might aid his arms which he had hitherto opposed, he sent two prelates to make his submissions to the see of Rome, and to testify his contrition and penitence for his past offences. This act, which may be intirely attributed to the influence of Anne of Bretagne over his mind, was the last of her life. She died at the castle of Blois, of a distemper caused by the improper treatment she received in her last lying-in, and only thirty-seven years of age.

The French historians, biassed by the dowry which she brought to the kingdom, have exhausted themselves in panegyrics on this princess. Her piety, her chastity, her liberality, her attachment to the two successive kings her husbands; her capacity, and spirit, have all been subjects of eulogium. Imaginary and ideal qualities have

have been added to complete the picture. I must confess, her conduct as a queen does not appear to justify these extravagant encomiums. Force and necessity alone reduced her to give her hand to Charles the eighth; nor though blameless as a wife, did she ever love the people or country over which she reigned. On the contrary, she ever cherished the most avowed predilection for the house of Austria; and endeavoured by every exertion of address or persuasion, to induce the king to marry his eldest daughter Claude to the young archduke, who was afterwards Charles the fifth. Disappointed in this intention by Louis's better principles, and attentive regard to France, she attempted to transfer the succession of Bretagne to her youngest daughter, and to marry her to the same prince. Though both these schemes, so big with ruinous consequences, were rendered abortive; she yet had sufficient influence over Louis, to retard and even totally prevent during her life, the consummation of the prince's
 Claude's

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Claude's nuptials with Francis count d'Angoulesme, to whom the united voice of the nation had destined her, as presumptive heir of the crown: and her death, which only preceded that of the king by a single year, may be regarded as happy to the state, in every point of view. Her bigotted veneration, and blind submission to popes or priests, was highly detrimental to the king's affairs; whose successes were always checked in the mid-way, by her importunate entreaties in their favour. Unforgiving and vindictive, she never pardoned an injury, or knew any limits to her resentment of it. Notwithstanding these incontestable defects, she was infinitely dear to her husband, who was during some time inconsolable for her loss. He remained several days shut up in his chamber, entirely devoted to grief; ordered all the comedians or musicians to quit the court, and refused audience to every minister or ambassador who did not appear in deep mourning. Yielding however to motives of public good, which

eyer

ever formed the line of his actions, he conferred his eldest daughter on the count d'Angoulesme; and the nuptials were solemnized at St. Germain-en Laye *.

The death of the queen, together with Francis's marriage, gave a new face to affairs. Louisa of Savoy, mother to the heir of the crown, began to display her shining, but dangerous character: and Louis, grown wise by experience, tender of his people, and frugal of the revenues, viewed with a melancholy foresight, the profusion and expensive munificence, which the count d'Angoulesme's character pre-

* Several conjoined motives, not totally void of weight, privately considered, rendered Anne of Bretagne peculiarly averse to this union.—She always flattered herself with hopes of male issue by the king. She detested madame Louisa, Francis's mother, whose unsubmitting spirit never bent beneath her. Above all, she feared and foresaw her child's unhappy days with Francis. This was too much verified in the result. She was by no means beautiful; and her husband, amorous and inconstant, never loved her: and if he treated her with respect himself, could not, or did not exact the same behaviour from his mother.

dicted;

dicted. In this anticipation of the evils which such qualities would probably entail on his kingdom, he used frequently to exclaim, "Ce gros gars-la gatera tout !" It is even highly to be suspected, that this formed one of the great motives to his third marriage; though the desire of effecting a close union and alliance with England, formed a more ostensible pretext.

Henry the eighth had a sister of uncommon beauty. The duke de Longueville, who had been taken prisoner at the battle of Guinegate, being sent over to negotiate a treaty of peace, first opened the overtures for this match, which were immediately accepted. The princess was conducted into France; received at Boulogne by a splendid train, at the head of which was the count d'Angoulesme, and married at Abbeville to the king. She was in early youth, gay, and fond of pleasure: her heart, susceptible of the impressions of tenderness and passion, had already engaged itself to a young English lord, whom

whom Henry had created duke of Suffolk, and to whom he had even intended to give his sister's hand. Under these circumstances, it cannot be supposed that Louis, a valetudinarian sinking into years, worn by the fatigues of war, tormented with the gout, and occupied continually with the recollection of his late queen, could be a very acceptable husband. Francis, amorous and gallant to excess, was captivated with her charms : and it is pretended that he might and would have pushed his good fortune to the utmost length ; if political considerations, and his mother's reprehensions, had not, though with difficulty, imposed a restraint on his desires *.

Meanwhile

* I find it impossible not to enter a little into this story, curious and interesting in itself, and on which the French writers have been very inquisitive and diffuse. Most of the cotemporary authors relate very circumstantially an anecdote, which, if true, puts it beyond all doubt, that Francis had gained the most complete and tender interest in the young queen's affections. Pressed by the importunities of her lover,

Meanwhile Louis touched the verge of life. His nuptial pleasures conducted him to

and yielding to his entreaties, she at length granted him a rendezvous in the palace of the Tournelles; and there can be little question that such an interview would have been decisive. The count habited himself in the most gallant manner, and was hastening to the queen's apartment, when he was met by Grignaux, an ancient gentleman who had been in the service of Anne of Bretagne. Struck with the more than common magnificence of his dress, knowing his predominant weakness, and mistrustful of his intentions, Grignaux rudely stopp'd him; and addressing him, demanded whither he was going so hastily. Francis refused to answer satisfactorily to this question—"Donnez vous en bien garde, Monseigneur," said he frowning; "pasques Dieu! vous vous jouez à vous donner un maître; il ne faut qu'un accident pour que vous restiez Comte d'Angoulême toute votre vie."—This bold and peremptory remonstrance was not lost on the person to whom it was directed. Francis paused on the very threshold of his mistress's chamber: love and empire disputed for an instant in his bosom. The latter triumphed; and submitting to Grignaux's counsel, he had either the magnanimity or the weakness to suffer himself to be led away from the temptation, and conducted out of the palace.

Notwithstanding

to the tomb. Forgetting his maxim which he used frequently to repeat, that "Love is the king of young persons, but the tyrant of old men," he abandoned himself to his immoderate fondness for the new queen. His constitution, already shaken, and debilitated by a slow fever, could not long sustain these unusual efforts. While elated with hope of future conquests, and secure on the side of England, he determined again to attack the Milanese, and prepared a considerable army to pass the Alps, he was seized

Notwithstanding the air of the marvellous spread through this adventure, it must be confessed that there is nothing in it either unnatural or improbable. Brantôme not only relates it; but adds, "that Mary attempted to counterfeit pregnancy on the death of the king." Madame Louise was not to be so over-reached, when a crown depended on the fact, and soon discovered the deceit. To this last part, however, no faith is due, nor does any other author assert it. Besides, it is universally allowed that she was exceedingly attached to Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk. Her conduct towards him, and marriage, put this beyond a doubt. Scarce three months elapsed between Louis's death, and her second nuptials.

with a dysentery at the palace of the Tournelles in Paris; which reduced him so low, that he breathed his last a few days after, at fifty-three years of age.

He was the most virtuous prince that France ever saw reign; perhaps who has reigned in Europe. It was proclaimed in the hall of the palace at his death, "Le bon roi Louis douze, Pere du peuple, est mort!"—The tears of sorrow and commiseration which he used to shed, when the necessities of war or state obliged him to levy an additional subsidy, however small, on his people, prove how justly he merited the appellation of their parent. His clemency, his benevolence, and unbounded philanthropy, were not inferior to Henry the fourth's: nor were these benign qualities obscured and diminished by that unhappy and frantic passion for women, by those pernicious foibles which accompanied the founder of the house of Bourbon to the grave. He was himself a pattern of conjugal fidelity; and his court, decent and restrained, nei-
ther

ther knew the elegant politeness, or the luxurious gallantry, which Francis the first introduced on his accession to the throne. His valour and military capacity had been distinguished in many campaigns. His temper open, candid, and chearful, made him easy of access, and gracious to the highest degree. He loved letters, and protected their authors; but did not extend to them that princely liberality, which has immortalized his successor. Through his whole character, we trace none of those splendid and glittering vices, which in kings, are too apt to dazzle and even delight; which carry in them that delusive magic, so calculated to impose on the human mind. His encomiasts were not poets and men of genius, prone to prostitute their talents. The voice of a whole people, their simple and unembellished lamentations, were his best panegyric. His person resembled the mind which animated it. Not elegant or beautiful, but amiable, interesting, and agreeable.

For his vices I search in vain. The

shades of his character I mean not to hide, His attachment to the queen sometimes degenerated into uxoriousness, and caused him to commit errors very injurious to his affairs. He was duped by Ferdinand, and insulted by Julius.—In him expired the elder branch of the house of Orleans, and that of Angoulême succeeded.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

*Accession and Character of Francis the first.
 —Character of Louisa countess d'Angoulême.—Battle of Marignano.—Death of Ferdinand of Arragon and the emperor Maximilian.—Interview of Francis and Henry the eighth.—Commencement of the wars between the king and emperor.—Character of Charles of Bourbon.—Of Bonnivet.—Death of Leo the tenth.—Milan lost.—Execution of Semblençai.—Conspiracy of the constable of Bourbon.—Minute circumstances of his treason and flight.—Death of the Queen.—The admiral Bonnivet enters Italy.—Bourbon lays siege to Marseilles.—Francis pursues him over the Alps.—Battle of Pavia.—Minute enumeration of the circumstances of the king's imprisonment.—Death of Bonnivet.—Francis's confinement, and removal to Madrid.—Measures of the regent.—The king's rigorous captivity.—Illness.—*

*Visit of the dukes of Alençon, his sister,
—Release.—Entry into his dominions.—
Commencement of the dukes of Estampes'
favour.*

THE accession of Francis the first to the crown, was accompanied with all those circumstances which could diffuse over it a particular lustre. Nature had lavishly endowed him with every quality of mind and person, formed to intoxicate both his people and himself. He had only passed his twentieth year a few months. Finely formed, with the mien and appearance of a hero, his bodily accomplishments were not inferior to his external figure. He excelled in the exercises of a cavalier, and pushed the lance with distinguished vigour and address. Courteous in his manners, bounteous in his temper even to prodigality; the nobility, whom Louis the twelfth's economical frugality, and more reserved deportment, had kept at greater distance, crowded round their youthful sovereign with mingled pleasure

sure and admiration. Eloquent in the cabinet, and courageous in the field; he shone alike in arts or arms; and while he extended his generosity to science and genius, impatiently panted for the occasion of signalizing his prowess, and acquiring the glory of a warrior *.

The situation of affairs at the death of the late king, gave immediate field to this martial spirit, Francis, equally determined to conquer the Milanese as his predecessor had been, laid instant and open claim to that duchy; nor did he either

* We may judge of the éclat with which Francis opened his reign, and how high was his reputation through all Europe, by the brilliant colours, with which Guichiardini has drawn his character. The portrait is wondrously flattering. — “Delle virtù, della magnanimità, dello ingegno, et spirito generoso di costui, s’haveva universalmente tanta speratizza, che ciascuno confessava non essere già per moltissimi anni pervenuto alcuno, con maggiore aspettatione alla corona. Perche gli conciliava somma gratia il fiore dell’età, che era di 22 anni, la bellezza egregia del corpo, la liberalità grandissima, la humanità somma con tutti, et la notitia piena di molte cose.”

withdraw

withdraw his pretensions, or suspend his preparations, in consequence of the formidable alliance, which Ferdinand, Maximilian, Sforza, the Switzers, and soon after Leo the tenth, formed for its preservation. While he repaired himself to Lyons, a part of his army crossed the mountains. After having surmounted infinite difficulties in the carriage of the artillery over rocks and precipices, they effected their passage; and used such extraordinary celerity as to surprise Prosper Colonna, who lay encamped with a thousand cavalry upon the Po, just as he was about to sit down to table, totally unapprehensive of their approach.

At this news, the king set forward to join his forces; having first deferred the regency during his absence, to the countess d'Angoulesme his mother. She acted too high and important a part under the reign of Francis, not to enter minutely into her character. She connected all the great qualities and defects of an elevated, but ill-regulated mind. The beauty of her person

position was scarce exceeded by that of any woman in the court; and, like her son, she surpassed in all those accomplishments of body, which confer elegance and grace. During the years of retirement which she had spent at the castle of Cognac in Angoumois after her husband's death, the education of her son had constituted her sole occupation: and to her care on this important point, the nation was indebted for the greater part of those mature and manly qualifications which rendered their sovereign an object of love and homage.— Her ambition and thirst of power were in some measure justified by her talents for government. She possessed courage personal and political; a magnanimity of soul undressed even in adversity; uncommon penetration, firmness, and capacity.— But these endowments were sullied and contrasted by yet superior faults. Not less vindictive than Anne of Bretagne, she trampled on public or private feelings of whatever nature, to gratify her resentment; and borne away by the impetuosity

of

of her passions, abused the influence which she possessed over the king, to purposes the most pernicious and criminal. Rapacious of the national treasures, and avaritious in the accumulation of her own, with all the little foibles of her sex, and a slave to more than female vanity; her bosom was yet susceptible of, and open to, all that storm of violent and contradictory emotions, which love and jealousy occasion in the human heart. Such was the celebrated Louisa of Savoy.

Meanwhile Francis having put himself at the head of his army, marched forward into the Milanese. All the cities opened their gates to him without a blow; and the Switzers, uncertain whether to treat or give battle, retiring before him, he encamped at Marignano, only a league distant from Milan. A reinforcement of ten thousand men arriving to their aid, determined them to the latter; and actuated by a sort of military frenzy, which the exhortations of the cardinal of Sion had inspired, they came furiously to attack

tack the French in their lines. History scarce affords any instance of an action, disputed with so enraged an animosity. It began about four in the afternoon in the month of October, and lasted more than three hours after the night closed in. Lassitude and darkness interposed a cessation of arms, without diminishing the ardour of the combatants, or deciding the fortune of the day; and so intimately were they mingled during the heat of the contest, that many squadrons reposed among those of the enemy. Francis himself, after having displayed the highest intrepidity, laid himself down upon the carriage of a piece of artillery; and, like Darius after the battle of Arbela, is said to have seized with eagerness a little water mixed with dirt and blood, which one of his soldiers brought him in a casque, to assuage his thirst. With the dawn of light, the Switzers renewed the charge; but at length were repulsed with prodigious carnage: and a part of them being cut to pieces in a wood where they attempted

to shelter themselves, the rest retreated in good order. Ten thousand remained upon the field.

The terror which this victory inspired, together with the return of the Swiss troops into their own country, left Sforza almost destitute of any assistance. He retired however into the castle of Milan, and endeavoured to defend himself in that fortress: but finding it impracticable, he surrendered it to the constable Charles of Bourbon, on honorary conditions; and a very ample pension being assigned him in France, was conducted into that kingdom. All the duchy immediately received the French.

This conquest was followed by an interview between Francis and Leo. It took place at Bologna. The artful pontiff flattered the young monarch, and dextrously bent him to the purposes he wished: their conference ended, the king returned in haste to Lyons, where his mother waited for him; and his arrival was signalized by acclamations of triumph.

Ferdinand king of Arragon expired at this time of a dropfy and atrophy, occasioned by the incentives which his queen Germana of Foix had administered to him, in hopes of issue. His own hereditary dominions, together with those of Isabella, descended to young Charles the archduke. This event did not prevent the emperor from making a great effort on Italy. He broke in upon the Milanese with near forty thousand Switzers and Germans, and even laid siege to Milan: but the tardy irresolution which ever characterized all Maximilian's enterprizes, giving time to the constable to approach the city, though with inferior forces, he retired; and his troops ill paid, were with difficulty kept together, and at length disbanded.

If the personal character of Francis, and the uniform success which had hitherto attended on him, might with reason give umbrage to the little powers of Italy; that of Charles was yet more alarming, as more ample and extensive. To the united realms of Castile and Arragon, he

he joined Naples, the Netherlands, and the Indies; and superadded to these vast the expectation of the imperial crown; which Maximilian's age and infirmities seemed to render near at hand. Francis himself foresaw the gathering storm, and attempted to dissipate or delay it by a treaty concluded at Montpelier, which was soon after followed by another with Henry the eighth of England: but the death of Maximilian broke down these insufficient barriers; and opening a field of competition so important and uncommon, laid the basis of private animosity and public wars, which though sometimes suspended, were never terminated or adjusted, during the lives of the two rivals.

The emperor died at Lintz upon the Danube, while he was employed in attempts to gain the electoral suffrages, for his grandson's nomination as king of the Romans. Charles and Francis instantly declared themselves candidates for the empire, though without any external or apparent marks of mutual antipathy.

it was soon decided, and the former ascended the imperial throne.

This increase of splendour and of power yet farther alarmed the king; and his disappointed ambition conspiring with his political terrors, from the union of so many states under one sovereign, concluded to hasten an interview previously agreed on between him and Henry. It took place between Ardres and Guines in the month of June. A magnificence unequalled, and which resulted from the temper of the two princes, splendid, profuse, and vain, made the spot retain the name of "the field of the cloth of gold." It lasted ten or twelve days; tournaments, banquets, and every species of diversion were exhibited. The queens of either monarch honoured it with their presence; and Francis expended in this empty spectacle, useless to his kingdom, a greater sum than Charles had distributed to acquire the imperial crown. It was attended with no durable or solid friendship between the kings. By a stroke of policy

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without eclat, but more sage and effectual, the young emperor had passed into England previous to the visit; and entered into connections with Henry, which experience proved to be much more permanent and binding.

While the ceremony of Charles's coronation was performed at Aix-la-Chapelle, Francis made an unsuccessful effort to reconquer the little kingdom of Navarre. Those extraordinary and sudden reverses of fortune which mark this whole reign, were equally visible here. Pampelona was taken, and the whole surrounding country reduced to subjection; but the rashness and imprudence of the French commander soon restored to Spain all she had lost, and obliged him to evacuate his new conquest.

Numberless sources of discord fomented the natural rivalry of the two monarchs; and Charles, more cautious, and carrying his views farther into futurity than the king of France, had already entered into a strict alliance with Leo the tenth, and
fixed

fixed the wavering pontiff in his interests. The re-establishment of Francisco Sforza, Maximilian's brother, in the duchy of Milan, was the grand connecting tie of this confederacy. So visibly replete with future woes did it appear, that Chievres, the emperor's governor and preceptor, when he received the news, expired of sorrow, in the sad anticipation of the calamities which must result from it; often repeating, "Ah! how many evils!"—His prediction was but too exactly verified.

A singular accident befel Francis at this time.—He was at Romorantin in Berri during the winter: according to the manners of the age, when an exertion of vigour or activity characterised and constituted almost every diversion, the king, with a small band of nobles attacked the count de St. Pol's house, who defended it with another party. Snow-balls were used by the assailants: the seigneur de Lorges, one of the opposite side, unfortunately threw down a torch of wood, which struck the king upon the head,

and wounded him severely. He was long confined by this blow, and as it became necessary to cut off his hair, he never would suffer it to grow again, but introduced the fashion of wearing the beard long, and the hair short, which subsisted generally in Europe till the reign of Louis the thirteenth, when the ancient custom was resumed.

The war which had long menaced, at length began. Both princes, concealing in some degree their animosity, and preserving the last appearances, only abetted and supported their respective vassals. The desire, common to each, of gaining the king of England, who professed himself the arbiter of their disputes, obliged to a certain moderation and delicacy: but this veil was soon withdrawn, and Francis, at the head of a gallant army, impatient to signalize his valour, and renew the laurels won at Marignano, faced his antagonist on the banks of the Schelde. — Here began the fatal train of errors, which in the event reduced France to

to the most calamitous condition. The command of the van belonged to Charles of Bourbon, in right of his office as constable; but the king, who never loved him, and whom the resentment of his mother had still farther prepossessed in his disfavour, chose to confide this important trust to the duke of Alençon, first prince of the blood. Not satisfied with this cruel and unjust affront, he added to it another not less injurious to his own fame. The emperor, desirous of avoiding an engagement, and fearful that from the vicinity of their forces, he might be unavoidably compelled to it, dislodged with some confusion, and retired under cover of a thick fog to a greater distance. Bourbon saw the opportunity, and implored his sovereign to profit of it; but Francis, jealous of a participation which must deprive him of part of the honour, and preferring the gratification of his own pique to more glorious and salutary principles, rejected with a cold contempt the constable's advice; and refused

to seize the occasion, which never returned, of combating his rival in person.

These repeated insults sunk deep into Bourbon's mind, though as yet they produced no apparent effect. Stung however with the preference given to the duke of Alençon, so contrary to equity or reason; he could not prevent himself from saying, conscious of the quarter from whence he was attacked, "That the king had followed the impressions of a woman, who had no more regard to justice, than she had honour."—The great lines of his character, which form a contrast to those of Francis, contributed to encrease their mutual dislike. Of a steady courage, intempered, and ever master of itself, he was calculated to command, and capable of the most arduous military achievements. No general of his age possessed in so extended a degree, the capacity of conciliating the affections of the soldiery, and moulding them to all his purposes. Magnanimous, and liberal where prudence required it, he was naturally economical.

nomieal. Silent, reflective, and inclined to taciturnity, he did not cultivate the arts of ingratiating himself: but wrapped in a haughty virtue, which disdained to stoop even to the honourable means of acquiring favour or popularity, he refused to owe any thing except to his own merits*.

Qualities,

* Charles of Bourbon was the second son of Gilbert de Montpensier, who died at Puzzoli, after an unsuccessful attempt to preserve the kingdom of Naples, under Charles the eighth. His elder brother, by the most wonderful and unexampled instance of filial piety, which history has ever preserved, expired on the tomb of his father, from the pungent and exquisite feelings of distress. His younger brother fell at the battle of Marignano.—The French writers seem generally to insinuate or assert, in terms more or less positive, that the countess d'Angoulesme had given him proofs the most undisguised, of her attachment; and that the indifference he first expressed, and the disdain with which he afterwards treated this passion, proved the source of all his future indignities and calamities.

By his marriage with Susanna of Bourbon, he inherited the immense possessions of that house; his

Qualities, such as those I have depicted, are not framed to raise their possessors in courts, and least of all in that of Francis the first. Bonnivet, who engrossed the royal grace and patronage; and whose ascendancy over his master's mind, produced the most deplorable consequences to France, is an evincing proof of my assertion. He resembled the first Villiers,

own paternal fortunes being limited and slender. Louis the twelfth had chiefly conducted to form this union, by his authority and personal interposition. When the nuptials were solemnized, the young duchess made a solemn and formal contract, by which, in case of her decease, she called to her succession Charles her husband, and endowed him with all her lands, rights, and pretensions. The nature of this donation in presence of the reigning sovereign, and confirmed by his express consent and approval, seemed to secure it from any doubts relative to its validity—but as Susanna, at the time of the request, wanted two or three months to be of age; this unimportant and unnecessary form became eventually the pretext, on which Louisa and the chancellor du Prat founded their infamous and unjust pretensions. She died in childhood about eight years after her marriage, leaving no issue.

duke

duke of Buckingham, in many points of view. The handsomest cavalier of the court, he was likewise the most arrogant, vain, and presumptuous: born with no talents for war, except courage, he yet had the command of armies entrusted to his care. Gallant and amorous, he was acceptable to women; and peculiarly so to Louisa of Savoy, under whose protection he rose. — Pertinacious in his schemes or determinations, and blinded by his opinion of himself, he never yielded to the advice of others, however disinterested or judicious; yet subservient to the purposes of greatness, and ministering with address to his sovereign's passion for pleasures and dissipation, he acquired, and retained an almost unlimited influence over him. — Being sent into Navarre at the head of a considerable body of forces, he besieged and took Fontarabia. True policy would have dictated the demolition of the fortifications; but Bonnavet proud of his conquest, and desirous of perpetuating its renown, would not hearken to the duke
of

of Guise's remonstrances on that head. The place was garrisoned, and soon after retaken by the Spaniards.

But in Italy, where the emperor and Leo had openly declared hostilities, the grand operations of war drew Francis's chief attention. He had committed the government of the Milanese to Odet de Foix, viscount of Lautrec, and brother to his celebrated mistress, madame de Chateau-Briant *. This nobleman, to whom so important a charge was confided, had scarce any thing to justify the choice, except his sister's favour. He surpassed even Bonnivet in haughtiness, and had already

* We know very little with certainty relative to this lady, or the manner of her first becoming connected with the king. Her name was Françoise de Foix. She was married to the seigneur de Laval in Bretagne. Her influence appears to have lasted till the king's campaign into Italy, which was followed by the battle of Pavia. Mademoiselle de Heilly succeeded to her place on Francis's return. Her death has been the subject of much inquiry and romance. It is pretended, probably without reason, that her veins were opened, by her husband's command.

disgusted

disgusted the great feudatory lords of the duchy, by his insupportable demeanour.

At the time when the papal and imperial armies entered the Milanese, Lautrec was in France, having left his brother Lescun to supply his place. The king, anxious for the preservation of his Italian dominions, would have instantly sent him thither; but he, conscious of the disorder which Francis's profusion, and his mother's unsatisfied rapacity, had introduced into the finances, absolutely refused to go, till the necessary sums for the payment of his troops were provided; nor was it before he had received the most solemn and reiterated assurances from Louisa, and those who superintended the public treasures, that the money should follow him, that he began his journey. On his arrival, the enemy retired before him in confusion; but by a neglect of those advantages which their situation and mutinous spirit, ready to revolt, repeatedly offered him, he was reduced in turn to retreat, after having lost the city and castle
of

of Milan, besides Parma, Placenzia, and several inferior places. The joy which Leo the tenth felt at this prosperous intelligence, produced an agitation of spirits so violent, that it was followed by a fever, of which he died the fifth day,

This event, so unexpected, and so injurious to the emperor's affairs, ought to have restored those of Francis; but the very evil which Lautrec had dreaded, and even in some degree predicted, ruined these flattering appearances. The countess d'Angoulême, by a procedure the most pernicious to her son, the most derogatory to her own honour, and the interests of the state, had diverted the funds destined to maintain the troops in Italy, to her own use. The precise motive which induced her to this violation of the promises she had made, is somewhat ambiguous and doubtful. Hatred to the countess de Chateau-Briant and her brother, is the most probable, and commonly assigned. The money, amounting to three hundred thousand ecus, had been deposited with Semblençai;

Semblençai; but Madame d'Angoulême demanded them with such earnestness, and threatened the superintendant with so severe a vengeance in case of refusal, that, overcome by the menaces she used, and reposing on her assurances of protection in case of the king's displeasure, he yielded. The total loss of the Milanese was the result of this iniquitous and inexcusable abuse of her authority. Lautrec, unassisted with the sums which had been promised him, could scarcely maintain himself in the duchy: whilst Francisco Sforza, received into Milan, and supported by Colonna and his subjects, strengthened himself in his new acquisitions.—Lescun, whom his brother had dispatched into France with the account of his distress, arrived at length, but arrived too late. That favourable occasion, which presents itself in the affairs of war, was past.

Repeated and unsuccessful efforts destroyed the army of Lautrec. After having been compelled by the seditious murmurs of his Swiss auxiliaries, to give

battle where a defeat was inevitable, and having vainly besieged Parvia, he sunk beneath the torrent of adverse fortune. Every resource being exhausted, and winter hastening on, he quitted his government, and returned into France, only attended by two domestics. Lescun was immediately invested in Cremona, and necessitated to capitulate: all the other places received the imperialists, and even Genoa revolting, expelled the French.

When Lautrec arrived at court, Francis refused to admit him to his presence, or hear his justification: but having, by means of the constable, obtained the occasion of speaking to his majesty, he accused the superintendants of the finances, with having occasioned all the disasters of the campaign, by withholding the supplies. Semblençai, terrified, and incapable of other defence, threw the blame upon the king's mother: but Louisa, adding the basest inhumanity to her other faults, found means to exculpate herself, and to persuade her son, that only Sem-

blençai

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blençai was criminal. Judges were appointed to examine into this dark affair. The chancellor du Prat was among the number. This man, without integrity, swayed by no principle of justice or honour, was devoted to the countess's interests or passions, and procured Semblençai's condemnation. The good old man, who had grown grey under four princes, and whom Francis used to honour with the endearing and respectful appellation of his father, was led out to punishment and ignominiously executed.—Lautrec, disgraced, was ordered to his government of Guenne *.

Notwith-

* The most candid and impartial survey must acquit Lautrec of blame, or any imputation respecting the loss of the Milaneze. He remained with his troops till they became so mutinous and discontented, that he was in imminent danger of being seized by them, as a pledge for the payment of their arrears; and was obliged to pass disguised through Switzerland, in his return to France. The constable of Bourbon, not without great difficulty, procured him at length an audience of the king in council, by declaring to his

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Notwithstanding his past misfortunes,
and in defiance of almost all the great
powers

his majesty, that he could fully justify himself; and would unfold some extraordinary secrets, with which it imported him deeply to be made acquainted.

Lautrec, when introduced into the royal presence, preserved undiminished his native haughtiness of deportment; and even presumed to complain highly to his master, of the ungracious reception he gave him. Francis was covered with astonishment at the recital made him. He ordered Semblençai to be instantly sent for; but in the interval which elapsed between this order and his appearance, he yet reproached Lautrec with incapacity and precipitancy in abandoning the Milaneze, notwithstanding the disappointment in his remittances; and added insultingly, that Colonna and Pescara, the imperial commanders, had been no better supplied, or punctually succoured. To these charges Lautrec modestly replied; and was engaged in his exculpation, when Semblençai arrived. The king regarded him with a look of furious indignation at his entrance, and demanded if the facts alledged against him were true. On the accusal of his mother as the origin of all these evils, his amazement and fury were heightened.—Louisa was summoned, and appeared. Semblençai repeated before her his justification.—The countess, unawed either by her own consciousness of its veracity,

powers of Europe combined against him, the king persisted in his resolution to recover the Milanese. He sent his favourite Bonnivet, lately created admiral, over the mountains, and had intended to command the army in person destined to this enterprise; when a conspiracy the most alarming and important checked his designs, and compelled him to watch over the tranquillity of his kingdom. I mean the constable's defection and revolt.

If ever treason was palliated by the circumstances which attended or produced it—if a crime so stigmatized and degrading, admits of apology or defence, it must be in the person of Charles of Bourbon. This nobleman, whom his birth, his qualities, his power and offices under

city, or by the presence of the king, gave a loose to the most unbounded resentment against the unfortunate treasurer, and scrupled not to accuse him of a lie, and to demand vengeance as of a traitor, who had aspersed her honour.—Semblençai's ruin and execution were the consequence of this iniquitous and foul transaction.

the crown, ought to have raised above the persecution of any individual, had been marked out by the countess d'Angoulême's unrelenting and incessant desire of vengeance. It is said, that the contempt with which he had refused her hand and person, which she offered him, superadded to the unconcealed sentiments of detestation which he avowed for her character, had inflamed her to a pitch of resentment, which could only be satiated by his ruin. Bonrivet, thirsting for the sword of constable, and hoping to obtain it by his disgrace, joined the countess; and du Prat, the most corrupt and vicious minister to whom the seals were ever confided, lent his aid to complete the scheme.

Not content to have prevented his marriage with the princess Renée, youngest daughter to Louis the twelfth, and sister of the queen; Louisa determined to strike at the root of his greatness, by laying claim to the vast possessions which he had inherited in right of his wife Sufanna of Bourbon, daughter to the famous lady of Beaujeau,

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Beaujeu, regent under Charles the eighth. She succeeded, though in contradiction to apparent equity, and by a perversion of every sacred or binding institution.

The unhappy constable, oppressed by unmerited severity, and driven to despair by a series of unparalleled insults, sacrificed his loyalty to his desire of revenge; and entered into a treaty with the emperor. Charles, who knew his value, and the important consequences which might ensue from such a chieftain gained, accorded, and exceeded all his demands *.

Francis

* Adrian de Croy, count de Rieux, and first gentleman of the bedchamber, was the person employed by the emperor to carry on the negotiation with Bourbon. He passed through France disguised as a peasant, and arrived, by night at Chantelle, the constable's seat in Auvergne, where he lay in an adjoining apartment to him, and settled the terms previous to his revolt. Charles, not satisfied with the powers granted to the count de Rieux, and desirous of entering into more exact conditions with the emperor, dispatched La Mothe de Noyers, a gentleman in his service, into Spain. He returned, bring-

Francis received advice of this dangerous conspiracy as he was on his rout to Lyons, in the intent of crossing the Alps; and he instantly took the resolution of coming to an explanation with the constable in person. He went to him at Moulins, and informed him candidly of the imputation laid to his charge. Bourbon

ing with him the most ample and general ratification of his demands. Bourbon buried the papers in a box under ground, at the foot of a tree; and began to assemble his partizans and vassals, in the pretence of accompanying the king into Italy. Matignon and d'Argouges, two gentlemen of that number, and who were privy to their lord's conspiracy, having confessed at Easter to a priest, and enumerated, among their other transgressions, a plot against the state in which they were engaged; he commanded them instantly to avow it to their sovereign, and set out immediately himself to impart this interesting intelligence to Brezé, senechal of Normandy. The gentlemen believing themselves lost, and conscious that their confession could alone preserve their lives, mounted on horseback; and meeting Francis at St. Pierre-le-Moutier in the Bourbonnois, threw themselves at his feet, and made an ingenuous disclosure of the whole transaction.

denied his having accepted the emperor's offers, though he confessed overtures had been made to shake his allegiance. As this confession was sufficient to justify his seizure, it was either owing to the king's generosity, and consciousness how unworthily he had been treated; or to his incapacity of arresting so powerful a lord, environed by vassals who adored him; that he was not committed to custody. Francis only commanded him to follow him to Lyons. Bourbon affected to obey; and being somewhat indisposed, began his journey in a litter. While he was on the way, intelligence was brought him that the parliament, in pursuance of the sentence passed against him, had ordered all his lands to be sequestered. Wounded anew by this information, he yet attempted to ward the blow; and hoping from Francis's generous magnanimity what Louisa refused, he dispatched the bishop of Autun, to implore that this decree might at least be suspended; and assuring the king that such an act of grace and tenderness

would bind him for ever to his service. Had his request been granted, there is the highest reason to suppose, it would have retained him in his duty; but by the inveterate animosity of his enemies, who had resolved his destruction, the bishop was arrested at only two leagues distance*.

Losing

* The minutest circumstances respecting the flight of so great a man become interesting. — When the bishop of Autun was seized by the marechal de Chabannes, a footman galloped in all haste to give the constable information of it. He was then at Chantelle. The instant he received this news, he set out by night for Herman, a town of Auvergne, where Henry Arnould, a gentleman attached to him, was governor. He arrived during the darkness, and awoke Pomperant and Montagnac-Tenzane immediately. — The former of these owed his life to him, for having killed Chisay, a celebrated gallant of the court, Bourbon sheltered him, and afterwards procured his pardon. — Tenzane, aged near eighty years at this time, remained inviolably attached to him in his misfortunes, though he had ever opposed and been averse to his treaty with the emperor. It was requisite that one should accompany him, while the other favoured his flight. As the latter employment was by far the most hazardous, it became a subject of contest, both desiring

Losing all expectation of soothing Francis's anger, after so manifest a declaration of it, he returned to his castle of Chantelle; and hearing that four thousand men were on their march to invest him in it, he quitted it by night with torches. After having walked some way, he contrived to deceive his attendants, and withdrew from them unobserved. They, attached to their lord in his misfortunes, would not abandon him; and continued to follow Francis de Montagnac-Tenzane, who had taken his horse and habit, in the apprehension that it was the constable. Day-break shewed them their mistake; and Tenzane, addressing them with tears, informed them, that their master had taken another road; that he thanked them for

desiring ardently this desperate commission. Chance alone decided it in favour of Tenzane. He executed it with the most consummate address, and afterwards rejoined his master in Italy.—The constable and Pomperant crossed all the county of Burgundy, having only made use of one precaution, that of steering their horses backwards.

their unshaken fidelity and affection; and besought them to repair to their own houses till farther order. — Meanwhile Bourbon continued his flight. Only one gentleman accompanied him, named Pomperant. He soon gained the Franche Comté, and from thence passing through Trent to Mantua, arrived safe at Genoa. No revolt or rebellion succeeded; nor did the king make any minute researches into the accomplices or abettors of the constable's intrigues. Shame and generosity pleading in his bosom for his injured subject, probably prevented him.

Amid these convulsions of the state, died Claude queen of France. Historians, lost among the crowd of battles and public transactions which diversify this reign, have scarce deigned to mark her death. She was called, "The good Queen," from her many amiable qualities and virtues; but her person corresponded not to the beauty of her mind. She was somewhat lame like her mother, Anne of Bretagne; and in other respects little calculated to retain

retain the affections of a husband, gallant, inconstant, and fond of pleasure. She neither interfered in affairs of policy, or possessed any ascendancy over the king. Madame d'Angoulesme retained the whole authority. Her end was accelerated, if not absolutely produced, by a disease which Francis communicated to her, and which was the result of his irregular and promiscuous intercourse with women. She expired at the castle of Blois, only twenty-four years old, and after having borne seven children *.

Though the dread of some intestine commotion prevented the king from en-

* Anne of Bretagne predicted her daughter's fortune, if married to the count d'Angoulesme; but Louis the twelfth, with that goodness so uniformly visible in his character, replied to her remonstrances, " Vous vous trompez ; elle n'est pas belle, mais sa vertu touchera le Comte, et il ne pourra s'empêcher de lui rendre justice." — Francis hardly justified this favourable opinion of him. Brantome does not scruple to say, in terms the most express, that he gave her a venereal distemper of the worst kind, which terminated in her death.

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tering Italy in person at this time, yet Bonnyvet continued his march, and reached the Milanese, unopposed. Had he pursued the advantages which his unexpected appearance, and the disorder among the imperial troops, afforded him, the whole duchy might have been regained to France: but he neglected them, till the approach of winter, and the plague, which made a rapid progress among his soldiery, necessitated him to retire. Bourbon, to whom Charles had confided the supreme command of his armies, in conjunction with Lannoy, viceroy of Naples, and the marquis of Pescara, followed the admiral with that impetuous and eager haste, which the wish of vengeance on his declared and mortal enemy lent him. Bonnyvet, wounded in the arm, and dreading more than death to fall into the constable's hands, left Bayard, so renowned in the annals of chivalry, to cover the retreat of his forces; and putting himself into a litter, arrived safe at Lyons. Bayard executed the charge committed to him with that noble intrepidity

pidity which has immortalized his name, but fell in the execution of it; and after his death, the French having totally evacuated Italy, every place in the Milanese returned to the emperor.

These successes emboldened Bourbon to enter Provence. His own intentions were to have pushed on without delay into the interior provinces of the kingdom, where he expected to have been joined by all his vassals; but Charles's generals, attentive only to their master's interests, compelled him to adopt other counsels, and laid siege to Marseilles. It was gallantly and obstinately defended; and after a blockade of six weeks, the Imperial commanders, alarmed at Francis's approach with a considerable army, dislodged in confusion; and re-embarking the greater part of their artillery, retreated with expedition across the mountains.

The king, naturally sanguine, and easily elated by the favours of fortune, determined to follow the constable by great marches. Bonnivet urged him to this
rash

rash project, and represented the condition of the Milanese defenceless and unprotected; the precipitate retreat of the Imperialists, dejected and dismayed. Superadded to these public motives, it is said a private one, not inconsistent with Francis's character — his desire to visit a beautiful lady of Milan, whom the admiral had depicted to him in colours the most animated and flattering, still farther induced him to it *. His oldest and wisest generals opposed the strongest reasons to dissuade him. They represented the state of his kingdom left open to the invasions of Charles and Henry; the

* This story is not so improbable, or ill-founded, as at first we may be inclined to suppose. Brantome, who was well acquainted with the intrigues of Francis's court, declares this in the most positive manner, as a secret known to few. He says, that her name was, "La Signora Clerice," a noble lady of Milan, and esteemed one of the finest women in Italy; that Bonnivet had obtained from her the last favours some years before, and inflamed the king with the same desire. The more we consider the characters of the admiral and his prince, the more are we inclined to credit this narration.

near

near approach of winter, and advanced season. Louisa, as if from a presentiment of the calamities which her son's conduct would entail on France, used every method to prevent it. As soon as she received notice of his intention to enter Italy, she dispatched three successive couriers to stop his march; or, if that could not be, at least to implore him to wait till she had embraced, and bid him a last adieu. The king was deaf to her entreaties or remonstrances; and ordered her to be informed by the last messenger, that he was too far advanced to think of suspending his progress, but that he invested her with the regency during his absence.

Francis's entry into the Milanese spread equal or greater terror, than Bonnivet's and Lautrec's had done in former campaigns. Bourbon, pursued in turn by his adversary, and flying before those whom he had so lately driven, scarce could avoid being overtaken. The French followed so close upon his steps, that their

troops

troops even entered one of the gates of Milan, only half an hour after he had escaped by another; and had the king persisted not to allow them time for recovery, from the consternation into which he had thrown them, no exertion of military skill in Charles's commanders could have prevented their defeat, or mutiny and separation. Unhappily, the admiral's advice, and ascendancy over his master, prevented him from embracing this salutary conduct; and prevailed on him, in opposition to the universal voice of his captains, to undertake the siege of Pavla.—The sequel is so well known to all Europe, that it is a needless task to recite it. The fatal day when Francis became the emperor's prisoner, has been related by so many historians, and with such a minute enumeration of the facts which accompanied and followed it, that I shall not enter on the narration. Some circumstances rather relating to the individual than the Monarch, and which History has considered

considered as beneath its dignity to recount, I shall mention.

The king gave in that celebrated engagement the most distinguished proofs of courage and prowess; nor was it to any want of military virtue, that his misfortunes are to be imputed. The number and the quality of those whom he killed with his own hand, are incontestable evidences of this assertion. His armour rendered him distinguished in the field, by its richness and splendour; whereas Bourbon, more cautious and circumspect, combated in the habit of a private cavalier, having given Pomperant his troop to lead. Thrown from his horse, wounded, spent with fatigue, and almost deserted by his followers, Francis continued to defend himself with a valour the most obstinate. Two Spanish gentlemen, Diego d'Avila, and Juan d'Orbieta, put their swords to his throat. In this exigency, a follower of Bourbon's, named La Mothe de Noyers; came up, and knowing the king, though his face was covered with blood,

blood, called out to him to surrender to the constable, who was not far off : but disdain- ing to deliver up his sword to a man whom he regarded as a traitor, he refused, and demanded Lannoy. While La Mothe ran every where in hope to discover his lord, the viceroy of Naples arrived at the spot, and received Francis's submissions. This was a peculiar good fortune, as Bourbon would certainly have taken him by force from any person of inferior authority or distinction.

Diego d'Avila first pulled off his gauntlets, and the surrounding crowd despoiled him of his coat of mail, his belt, and spurs.—Meanwhile the marquis del Guasto approached the king, and saluted him with great respect ; and, as he requested with peculiar earnestness, that he might not be led into the city of Pavia for a mockery to the inhabitants, the marquis conducted him to his own tent. The wounds he had received in the action were inspected, and carefully dressed. One was near the eyebrow, another in the arm, and

and a third in his right hand. Besides these, he had received several balls from a harquebussé in his cuirass. The marquis del Guasto had the honour to sup with him; and Bourbon presented the napkin to his majesty. The Spanish historians declare that he received it very graciously, and even permitted the constable to kiss his hand on the knee; but the French writers assert the contrary, and say he turned his back on him with contempt, and would not take the napkin from him. During his repast, the discourse naturally turned on the past action; and Francis, with infinite modesty, propriety, and eloquence, pointed out the causes which conduced to its loss, and chiefly blamed the cowardice of the Switzers and Italians in his army. When he retired to rest, none of his valets being near to aid him to undress, a certain sieur de Montpezat, who had been made prisoner by a Spanish soldier, presented himself for that purpose; and the king, pleased with his humble assiduity and attention, redeemed, and

elevated him to the dignity of a marshal of France.

Many renowned commanders perished on that day: Lescun and Bonnivet were among the chief. The latter expiated, in some measure, his fatal advice, by the gallantry and courage with which he devoted himself to death. Seeing the fortune of the battle waver, and the troops disposed to fly, he attempted to rally the Switzers, and some cavalry: but not being able to succeed, and no hope remaining of victory, he raised the vizor of his helmet, that he might be universally known; and rushing into the thickest ranks of the enemy, opposed his breast to their swords, and fell, covered with honourable wounds. Bourbon had given express orders to take him alive if possible; and, in case that was not possible, to kill him; in no case to let him escape. After the engagement, his body was found; and the constable standing over it, and having considered it long in silence, only exclaimed, "Ah! malheureux! Tu es cause de
" la

“ la ruine de la France, et de la mienne!”

The duke of Alençon, who had been married to the celebrated Margaret of Valois, sister of Francis, behaved unworthy his rank as prince of the blood. He fled among the first, and retired to Lyons with a number of the nobility, where he died in a few days of grief and shame. The king of Navarre, Henry d'Albret, remained a prisoner.

Lannoy was meanwhile in the utmost anxiety how to dispose of his royal captive. The day after the action, he conducted him to the castle of Pizzhigitone, where he remained two months under the care of Don Fernand Alarçon. No positive orders arriving from the emperor's council in Spain, for his removal to another fortress, the viceroy of Naples became more apprehensive of some accident, which might procure or terminate in his enlargement. The Imperial troops, who had scarcely received any pay, were disposed to mutiny, and might easily seize on his person to ensure their arrears.

To carry him to the castle of Naples, where he might have been securely detained, was a much more eligible plan; but they dreaded lest the pope or the Venetians might attempt to rescue him on the road. It was still more hazardous to transfer him into Spain by sea, because the galleys of Andrea Doria, and of France, were stationed to intercept his passage. — Lannoy's address extricated him from these numerous difficulties. He found means to engage the king to embrace those measures, of his own accord, which otherwise it would have been impossible to execute; and persuaded him that a personal interview with Charles, was the speediest method of adjusting so weighty an affair; and restoring him to freedom. Francis, who, generous himself, supposed others to have hearts equally magnanimous and enlarged, eagerly caught at the insidious proposal, and fell into the snare. To such a pitch of punctilious honour did he carry his sentiments, that he even opposed himself to a sedition among the

Imperial

Imperial soldiery, of which he might have profited; and not only commanded Doria to make no attempt on the Spanish vessels which conducted him from Italy; but caused the regent to lend six galleys to Lannoy. About the middle of June they set sail from Portofierro, and arrived happily at Alicant. The king was brought under a strong guard to Madrid, and lodged in the castle*.

The consternation and public affright which Francis's defeat and captivity spread throughout the whole kingdom, is equalled by nothing in the French annals, except the capture of John at the battle of Poitiers. Louisa, his mother, exclaimed at the sad news, in the recollection of her reiterated, but ineffectual efforts to stop

* I must own myself more indebted to Brantome, than to any other author, for most of the particulars I have enumerated, relative to the battle of PAVY. The memoirs of Du Bellay, and those of De Thou, contain many curious remarks. "Les anecdotes des reines et régentes de France," together with Mezeray, furnish likewise matter of entertainment and information.

his march over the mountains, " *Helas!*
" il ne m'a voulu croire, ha ! que je lui
" avois tant dit !" — Though oppressed by every feeling of parental woe; though originally the author of these calamities, by her malevolent and unjust persecution of Bourbon; though unpopular, and holding the regency, in this convulsion of the state, by a tenure the most precarious; she nevertheless sustained her courage. She did more, and even effaced, in a great measure, her past offences, by the wisdom, vigour, and uniformity of her conduct. Henry the eighth of England, the Venetian republic, and the reigning pontiff, Clement the seventh, were all induced to quit the emperor's party by her solicitations. She negotiated in every court, and moved all the springs which can actuate statesmen or politicians, to effect her son's release.

During these endeavours of the regent, Francis had time to discover and repent the error, into which his romantic generosity and honour had led him. Instead
of

of the interview with which he had been flattered; instead of treating with his conqueror, as from gentleman to gentleman; instead of that courteous and noble reception which he had expected, and which every part of his own behaviour intitled him to receive; he found a solitary prison, guards inexorable and vigilant, a confinement unusually severe and strict.— Charles did not deign to see him in this rigorous captivity; and the only recreation permitted him, was to take the air on a mule, surrounded with soldiers. This unworthy and unkingly usage, continued for six months, produced a fever, the effect of disappointment and vexation. The arrival of the duchess of Alençon, his beloved sister, to whom the emperor had granted permission to visit him in this distressful situation, conducted principally to his recovery: and Charles himself, ashamed of his cruel insensibility, and terrified lest his prisoner's death might rob him of the vast advantages he doubted not to derive from his release,

condescended to make him a short, but consolatory visit, in which he affected the utmost compassion, and gave him prospects of speedy freedom. These fallacious expectations vanished with the king's return of health; and, in the despair of regaining his liberty, except on conditions so humiliating and ignominious as to preclude any acceptance of them, he entrusted to his sister, on her return, a deed, by which he resigned his kingdom to the dauphin Francis, his eldest son. Margaret carried this act of resignation into France.

Charles, touched at length, not by motives of generosity or greatness of soul, but by apprehensions of interest and narrow policy;—viewing the state of the Milanese, left defenceless by the marquis de Pescara's death, and a great league formed for the release of Francis—entered into a treaty with him. Even then he did not relax the rigor of his demands; though Gattinara, his chancellor, predicted their certain violation, and refused, with unsubmitting

submitting firmness, to affix to them the seals. — The marriage of the emperor's sister, Eleanor of Portugal, with the king, formed the cement of this famous treaty: but the restitution of Burgundy was an article so injurious to the state, so ruinous and fatal in its nature, that the king protested against it in private, previous to his departure from Madrid.

After a captivity of near thirteen months from the battle of Pavia, he was reconducted by his two keepers, Lannoy and Alarcon, to the bank of the river Bidassoa, near Fontarabia: while Lautrec brought the two young sons of France, the dauphin and his brother Henry, who were to be delivered up as hostages for their father, to the opposite side. The exchange was made, and Francis once more entered his kingdom. — At Bayonne he found Louisa and Margaret, who attended his arrival. The interview between them was touching and lively, in the highest degree. The countess d'Angoulême, who knew the constitution of her son, and his disposition

position to gallantry, had prepared for him ~~setters~~ of a softer nature than those he had experienced at Madrid. She presented to him the celebrated Mademoiselle de Heilly, better known under the title of duchess of Estampes. Her age at this time did not exceed eighteen years. A beauty of person the most delicate and perfect, superadded to wit, and an understanding improved by all the cultivation of the age, ensured her conquest over the king. He became passionately attached to her; and their connection lasted in its full force during the remainder of his life.

Here let us pause a moment! The re-entry of Francis into his dominions forms a new epocha in his reign.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

Treaty of Madrid violated.—War renewed between Francis and the Emperor.—Unsuccessful attack of Naples.—Death of Lautrec.—Peace of Cambray.—Marriage of Francis to Eleanor of Portugal.—Magnificence of the king.—Death of his mother, Louisa.—Interview of Marseilles.—Marriage of the duke of Orleans to Catherine of Medicis.—War renewed.—The Emperor enters Provence.—Death of Francis, the Dauphin.—Circumstances of it.—His character.—Reflections.—The Emperor retreats into Italy.—Marriage of James the fifth to the princess Magdalen.—Character of Anne de Montmorenci.—Interviews of Nice and Aigues-Mortes.—Story of the cave in Dauphiné.—Francis's amours.—Indisposition, and consequent change.—Visit of the Emperor.—Alteration of the ministers.—Third war.—Description of the court.—Battle of Cerizoles.—The
Emperor

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*Emperor enters Picardy.—Intrigues of the
 dukes of Estampes.—Peace concluded.—
 Death of the duke of Orleans.—Circum-
 stances.—Character.—Death of the Count
 d'Enguien.—Parties formed in the court.
 —Francis's illness.—Circumstances.—Dy-
 ing admonitions to the dauphin.—Death.—
 Character.*

FRANCIS the first was still in the prime of life when his imprisonment terminated, and he saw himself again restored to his throne and people. His misfortunes, and consequent captivity, though they had not made so deep an impression on him, as to alter essentially his character, yet rendered him more circumspect and cautious in his conduct. The rash and impetuous valour which had distinguished him hitherto, was calmed, and attuned into a serener courage; and policy, or interests of state, compelled him to adopt measures less disinterested, and better adapted to the temper of the emperor, his

his antagonist.—But these were only partial changes: his magnificence, ever accompanied with profusion; his unrestrained attachment and liberality to favourites; his passion for women, and all the luxurious dissipations of a court; these errors yet characterised him in the most extended degree: and, by introducing confusion into his finances, and a disorder through every department of government, gave Charles a superiority in the affairs of war, and involved his kingdom in numberless evils.

So oppressive and severe were the conditions of the treaty of Madrid, that the king, conscious his infringement of them would be approved and defended through all Europe, no sooner recovered his freedom, than he declared to Lannoy, who had accompanied him to demand their execution; that Burgundy, being a part, not of the royal domain, but of the kingdom, could not be alienated or dismembered by any exertion of the regal authority. He dispensed himself from his
oaths,

oaths, as compulsory, and the effect of necessity ; and, having tendered other concessions and offers for the release of his children, and for a final peace, prepared himself to exert new military efforts to compel the emperor to the acceptance of them. In this design, a great league was concluded at the castle of Cognac in Angoulmois, whither he had retired, during the summer, to enjoy the pleasures of the chase. The powers confederated were, Francis, the pope, Sforza, the Venetians, and Florentines.

Had their combined forces attacked the Milanese, destitute either of troops or commanders, without delay, it must have been inevitably re-conquered : but a negligence and inattention to these manifest advantages, equally extraordinary and blameable, gave Bourbon time to arrive, and Lannoy to provide for the safety of Naples. The former, to whom Charles had promised the investiture of the duchy ; after having forced Sforza to surrender the castle

of

of Milan, and having exhausted every art to satisfy the murmurs of his soldiery, discontented from the want of pay, took the daring and desperate resolution of marching to Rome. He executed it; and, though killed on the attack by a musket-shot under the walls, his victorious army entered, and pillaged that celebrated city. Clement, who had retired to the castle of St. Angelo, was necessitated to capitulate from famine, and remained a prisoner in the emperor's hands.

An outrage so violent, and even deemed sacrilegious, as that of Charles on the common father of Christendom, produced a new league between Henry the eighth and Francis. Jealousy and terror cemented this alliance. Lauffrec, who had long languished under the displeasure of his prince, was recalled, and placed at the head of the army destined against Italy. Grown distrustful by his past misfortunes, and foreseeing, in the character of the king, fresh sources of future disaster and defeat, he would

would have declined the honour tendered him : but being obliged to submit to the royal mandate, he prepared to pass the mountains.

The two kings sent their heralds to defy the emperor ; who returned these insults by reproaches and invectives against Francis, whom he branded with epithets the most opprobrious, and challenged to single combat. In the impotence of his resentment, he even violated the sacred duties of humanity and clemency, by revenging in some degree the errors of the father on his blameless children. He not only rendered the confinement of the young dauphin and the duke of Orleans unusually strict ; but shut them up in apartments darkened, and did not permit them any sort of diversion or amusement. His visits and notice of them were short, cold, and unfrequent ; and, by a barbarity unworthy his character, he deprived them of their most faithful and beloved domestics, whom he sent, to work chained in his gallees.

Meanwhile Lautrec again entered the Milanese, so often conquered, and so often lost. With the fortune constantly attendant on the French arms at their first arrival, he rapidly reduced it to subjection. On the news of his approach, the Imperial generals released the sovereign pontiff, and hastily evacuated Rome. Lautrec pursued them by great marches; and, presenting battle to their troops, enervated by plunder, and thinned by pestilential diseases, the effects of their intemperance and licentiousness, drove them before him in confusion. Naples afforded them an asylum. It is said, that had he improved their panic, and laid instant siege to the place, he might have hoped every thing from their general disorder and dismay: but he lost that favourable juncture, in the attack of several inferior towns, and at length sat down before it.

By that unhappy fatality which seemed to accompany the enterprizes of Francis beyond the Alps, but which was really the

necessary consequence of his own negligent remissness, and desultory resolutions, or unequal measures, all these promising appearances were overclouded, and rendered finally abortive. (Lautrec, anxious for his own and his sovereign's glory; and though defective as a commander, animated with the warmest enthusiasm for his country, exerted all his endeavours to avert the destruction which he had early predicted.—He implored the king to satisfy, and conciliate the celebrated Doria, whose concurrence and aid to block up the port of Naples, was indispensably requisite to the capture of the city. It was debated in the cabinet council to comply with this advice: but Du Prat and Montmorenci having strongly opposed it, from some little motives of private interest and emolument, this wholesome and salutary counsel was rejected. The siege was unavoidably protracted; summer advanced, and distempers began to spread themselves among the French: the hopes of success
grew

grew fainter every day; and the army, almost rendered incapable of action by its losses, sunk into universal dejection. Lautrec long sustained his courage unshaken; but seized at length with a mortal disease, he became unable to perform the functions of a general. His officers endeavoured to induce him to retire to Capua: but he had sworn to enter Naples victorious, or die; and, sinking under the pressure rather of intellectual disquietude and pain, than bodily infirmity, he expired in the camp. With him the poor remains of vigour and firmness, which yet animated his troops, became extinct. The marquis de Saluzzo, on whom the supreme command devolved, capitulated soon after, and died in imprisonment. All Naples was evacuated by the French; and these vast preparations, like so many which had preceded them, produced no advantage to the kingdom.

Tired with war, and exhausted by such continual efforts, the various princes of

Europe suspended, from common weakness, their mutual hostilities. This voluntary truce was followed by a final pacification. Margaret of Burgundy *, aunt to the emperor, and Louisa, mother of Francis, were the mediators of an accommodation so desirable. It was concluded at Cambray; and the terms, though burthenfome and severe to France, were yet submitted to, in the passionate wish to rescue the dauphin and his brother

* She was a princess of infinite wit and capacity. Her affiance to Charles the eighth having been dissolved from political motives, Margaret was sent back into the Low Countries. She was afterwards demanded by Ferdinand and Isabella, for their only son Don Juan. On her voyage from Flanders into Spain, a violent storm attacked them near the coast of England. The vessel was expected to sink. Amid such a scene of terror and confusion, she had the calmness and presence of mind, to tie all her jewels round her arm in a waxed cloth; annexing these two humorous lines of poetry, descriptive of her peculiar fortune,

“ Cy git Margot, la gente Demoiselle,
“ Qu'ent deux Maris, et si mourut Pucelle.”

from

from their captivity, which formed one of the most important articles.

The marechal de Montmorenci was sent to Andaye, on the frontier of Spain, with the ransom: while Velasco, constable of Castile, conducted the two princes, and Eleanor, the sister of Charles, to the opposite side of the river. The exchange being reciprocally made, they proceeded towards Bourdeaux. Francis advanced to meet them as far as the abbey of Veien in Gascony, and the nuptial ceremonies were performed there the same day. Eleanor was at this time thirty years of age: her person had very few charms; and the king, already enslaved to his mistress, the duchess of Estampes, never regarded her with affection, and considered the union as merely political. She received, notwithstanding, all the external honours of royalty, and was ever treated by her husband with great respect. As Montmorenci began likewise about this time to acquire a

prodigious interest and ascendant over his master; the queen, conscious of her little intrinsic consequence, attached him to her, and supported herself by his influence and credit.

During the interval of tranquillity and repose which succeeded to the almost continual wars since Francis's accession, he mixed the patronage of letters, and munificent protection of all the liberal arts, with the splendour and luxury which eminently distinguished his court. The simplicity of Louis the twelfth's manners was forgotten; and the introduction of ladies constantly about the person of the sovereign, a custom unknown before in Europe, breathed a spirit of gallantry, which the king's character and conversation were calculated to encourage. "Une cour sans dames," said he frequently, "est une année sans printemps; une printemps sans roses." His sister Margaret,

garet, afterwards queen of Navarre, was one of the most accomplished princesses of whom we read in story. Though the martial spirit of chivalry still gave an air of rudeness and ferocity to the diversions and entertainments exhibited ; yet an elegance and refinement insensibly mixed itself with them, and began to take off the edge of this remaining barbarism. Fontainebleau, Chambord, and St. Germain-en-Laye successively appeared : and genius, waking at the encouragement extended to it by so great a monarch, exerted its first attempts in eulogiums to his honour,

The death of the duchess of Angoulême followed soon after the peace, which her endeavours had contributed chiefly to produce. Paris being ravaged by the plague, she retired to Fontainebleau ; but the environs being infected, obliged her to take the rout of Romorantin in Berri. Sickness compelled her to stop at Grez, a little village in the Gatinois ; and she ex-

pired there after a few days illness, at fifty-four years of age*.

Though

* Brantome relates a circumstance of her death, strongly indicative of the superstitious terrors, to which even princes were not superior, in the sixteenth century, nor was genius, however elevated, exempt from them.

Three days before she expired, says he, being awake during the night, she was surprized at an extraordinary brightness, which illuminated the chamber. Apprehending it to be the fire which her women made, she reprimanded them; but they replied, that it was caused by the moon. The duchess ordered her curtains to be undrawn; and discovered that a comet produced this unusual light. "Ah!" exclaimed she, "this is a phænomenon that appears not for persons of common condition! Shut the window; it is a comet, which announces my departure: I must prepare myself for it."—The ensuing morning she sent for her confessor, in the certainty of her approaching dissolution. The physicians assured her, that her apprehensions were ill-founded and premature. "If I had not seen," replied Louisa, "the signal for my death, I could believe it; for I do not feel myself exhausted or spent." She expired on the third day from this event.

It is said she had always extremely dreaded the termination of life, and could never support the mention

Though her masterly and unwearied efforts to procure the king's release, seem in some measure to efface the criminal conduct which preceded it; yet cannot it obliterate the stain of Bourbon's exile, and Semblançai's execution. She was more lamented by her son, than by his people; and seems to have been quickly forgotten by both. Francis solemnized her funerals with his accustomed magnificence, and interred her at St. Denis, among the sovereigns of France; and Adulation, ever ready to celebrate even the imaginary virtues of the great, crowned her tomb with laurels and panegyrics.

The alliance between France and England still subsisted. The two kings, mutually desirous of cementing it, met at St.

tion of mortality, even from the pulpit. Long after this period, and even late in the last century, all the appearances of the celestial bodies, not perfectly comprehended by the multitude, were supposed to indicate and foretel the deaths of sovereigns, or changes and revolutions of empires.

Joquelvert,

Joquelvert, a little village between Calais and Boulogne. Every mark of mutual confidence, honour, and friendship, was shewn by each in turn, and all the appearances of a perfect union displayed in their behaviour. We find no period of history, when the interviews of monarchs were so common and frequent as in the sixteenth century, and more peculiarly under this reign; yet none, where the compacts entered into were so soon violated, and the wars so obstinate, and continually renewed.

This conference was followed, in the ensuing year, by another of higher consequence, and greater splendor: I mean the famous interview of Marseilles. Francis, intoxicated with the wish to reconquer the Milanese, adapted all his measures to that great purpose. He courted all the Italian princes, and especially the house of Medici, as capable of being made eminently subservient to his views on the duchy. These motives determined him to enter
into

into the closest connections with Clement, the reigning pope, by demanding Catherine, his niece, in marriage for Henry duke of Orleans. The pontiff, flattered by this condescension in so great a monarch, and passionately anxious to aggrandise his family, accepted the offer with a pleasure he did not affect to conceal. The king's galleys conducted him and the princess into France. Francis, attended by the queen and his whole court, made his entry into Marseilles the day following that of his holiness. The nuptials were celebrated with uncommon magnificence, and the festivities continued during five weeks. Henry and Catherine were both in very early youth. Their ages only differed by thirteen days, nor had either of them completed their fourteenth year: yet Clement, fearful lest from the change of political circumstances, the marriage, if not completed, might be liable to a dissolution, demanded its instant consummation, which was performed the same night. The king
founded

founded vast expectations on this alliance, in case of future hostilities with the emperor; but the untimely death of the pope, which happened only eleven months afterwards, dissipated, and rendered them ineffectual.

New causes of discontent between these powerful and inveterate rivals, increased continually, and portended the renewal of those convulsions which had already interested and disturbed all Europe. Francis first openly appeared in arms. The execution of his agent at Milan, whom Francisco Sforza, in the intention of gratifying Charles, had caused to be privately put to death in prison, formed a pretext for the rupture: and as the duke of Savoy had likewise given many causes of umbrage and dissatisfaction, besides the refusal of permission to his troops to pass through Piedmont, he no longer preserved any measures with that prince. Brion, lately created admiral, entered, and subjected, almost without a blow, his whole dominions;

dominions; while he vainly implored the emperor's protection. Sforza died at this time; and it is said that terror at the approach of the French, from whom his family and himself had undergone so many evils, hastened or produced the distemper of which he expired.

Meanwhile Charles, victorious from the capture of Tunis, and crowned with trophies gained over the Moors, prepared to revenge the injuries done to the duke of Savoy. After having given vent to his indignation against Francis, by an harangue in the conclave, filled with accusations and complaints of his perfidy and ambition, he joined his general Antonio de Leyva, so renowned for his great military exploits, and began the campaign. His victory in Africa; the servile flatteries of his courtiers and parasites; joined to the predictions of astrologers and fortune-tellers, who were then in no small estimation even with the wisest princes; had so inflated his vanity, and perverted an under-

understanding naturally cool, sagacious, and discerning, that, in opposition to the entreaties of his oldest captains, he determined to enter Provence. Every argument and motive urged to dissuade him, were ineffectual. Blinded to reasons the most cogent and forcible; untaught by Bourbon's experience and ill success; he passed the river Var, and continued his march.

The king's wisdom and provident care were never more ably exerted, than in this imminent necessity. Distrustful of fortune, and cautious from the remembrance of past disasters, he resolved to trust no event to the uncertain fate of battle; but to embrace a plan more circumspect and prudent. To ensure the safety of his kingdom, he sacrificed a single province; and anticipated the ravages of the Imperial forces, by laying waste, and totally destroying the country through which he knew they must pass. Himself encamped at Valence, and prepared to try the issue

of a second combat, in case Montmorenci, vanquished in a first, rendered it necessary for the general safety.

But while these public duties engrossed the attention of the King, a stroke of the most calamitous nature befel the Parent. The dauphin, his eldest son, a prince of the highest expectations, and peculiarly dear to his father, and to France, expired at nineteen years of age. The circumstances of his death, suspicious, and indicative of poison, increased his sorrow and affliction. He had been engaged at tennis, in the meadow of Ainay near Lyons; and having violently heated himself by the exercise, dispatched one of his pages to draw him some water. Donna Agnes Beatrix Pacheco, a lady of honour in the service of the queen, had presented him with a curious cup made of earth, which gave a remarkable coolness to any liquor poured into it. While the page laid down this cup on the side of the well, and was employed in pulling up the bucket,

THE MEMOIRS OF THE

bucket, a certain Italian of Ferrara, by birth a nobleman, named Sebastian Montecuculi, approached, and unperceived mixed poison in the vase, which the dauphin immediately drank. He was seized with instant and most excruciating pains; but being warmly desirous to embrace his father before his death, and to breathe his last in his arms, he caused himself to be put into a boat on the Rhone, in hopes of reaching the city of Valence alive: but even this little consolation was not reserved for his unhappy parent. The dauphin died, before he could reach him, at Tournon. Francis's magnanimity and fortitude sunk beneath so cruel and disastrous a trial; and it was long before he recovered in any degree his wonted serenity. Henry, his second son, was not equally dear to him with the one he had lost. If we may credit the cotemporary historians, he possessed many of those qualities which conciliate admiration and love. In his person, he was handsome,

1. 2 and.

and formed with symmetry. His temper, serious, steady, and reserved, seemed to indicate an understanding more ripe and mature than his years gave reason to expect: and his deportment at the interview of Marfeilles, impressed with respect and wonder, that numerous and august assembly.

Montecuculi was arrested, and confessed the crime. Under the violence of torture, he even accused Antonio de Leyva of being his accomplice, and threw out some dark and enigmatical insinuations against the emperor himself: but these imputations are too palpably false and unworthy to admit of a moment's belief, and were merely extorted from the agony of pain. He was himself executed, and torn in pieces by wild horses, at Lyons. The duke of Orleans succeeded to the title of dauphin, and left his own to Charles, the king's youngest son *.

Charles

* Notwithstanding the general testimony of historians, there appears to be a great uncertainty spread

Charles pursuing his route through Provence, during this sad catastrophe, plundered the city of Aix, and sat down before Marseilles. At the end of a few weeks he found, when too late, the justice of those remonstrances which had been made him previous to his expedition. Antonio de Leyva had already breathed his last, killed by the same distemper which had carried off Lautrec before Naples. His troops became the prey of a thousand diseases incident to camps, and no prospect appeared of the surrender of Marseilles. Yielding to necessity, and compelled by these accumu-

over this whole transaction, Montecucculi impeached the Imperial generals: the French writers have not scrupled to name, and with more probability, Catherine of Medici, as the perpetrator of the dauphin's murder, in the view of advancing her husband to the throne: but even this supposition ought not to be embraced without stronger reasons, Poison is usually attributed to the sudden exits of distinguished personages; and the symptoms of the dauphin's disease and death might have all been produced by drinking cold water, after an exercise which had exceedingly heated his blood,

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lated disasters which every day encreased, he began his march back into Savoy. All the roads were filled with his expiring soldiers; who, unable to support the fatigue of so unfortunate and painful a retreat, and incapable of accompanying their commander, dropped under the weight of their arms, and fell into the hands of the enemy.—Montmorenci, carrying his maxims of timid circumspection to an unjustifiable length, remained still in his camp near Avignon; and, instead of following an army dismayed and broken by toils, suffered them to escape, and repass the mountains.

Charles, covered with confusion, and desirous to hide his shame, remained only a short time in Italy. He embarked on his galleys at Genoa; and arriving, after a dreadful tempest, in Spain, buried himself in the recesses of his palace.

Mindful of the ancient alliances between the two crowns, and moved by the critical situation of France, menaced with

so terrible an invasion, James the fifth, king of Scotland, flew to the assistance of Francis. He came too late for any actual service, the emperor being already on his retreat. This proof of generous and enthusiastic attachment so deeply touched the king, that he could not refuse him the boon he demanded; his daughter Magdalen. The princess was in the bloom of youth, beautiful, and accomplished: her ambition, gratified by a throne, induced her to accept with joy the proposal, though every endeavour was used to instil into her an aversion to it. The nuptials were celebrated at Paris, and the young queen accompanied her husband into his kingdom; but a hectic fever, with which she was seized soon after her arrival, put an end to her life, within a year from the marriage*. James, become

* Brantome plainly indicates that her death was caused by sorrow and mortification, at having sacrificed her own delicious country to the ambition of reigning

become a widower, and persisting in his desire of being connected with France, received from the king, Mary of Guise in second marriage.

The war was still continued with alternate success in Flanders and Piedmont; but the apparent interest which Francis took in the affairs of Scotland, and the two successive unions with its sovereign, gave a jealousy to Henry the eighth, and gradually detached him from the strict cordiality he had long professed for him.

Montmorenci possessed at this time an influence the most extensive and unbounded; he concentrated in himself almost all

reigning in a rude and barbarous kingdom. When convinced by sad experience of this truth, and conscious that her destiny permitted her to return no more, she sunk under it, frequently exclaiming, "Hélas! j'ai voulu être reine!" Ronsard, the famous poet, has celebrated the nuptials, and very minutely described them in a sort of epithalamium, not inelegant. He was at that time a page to the duke of Orleans, who presented him to the queen at her departure, and he accompanied her into Scotland.

the great powers of the royalty. To the sword of constable, and grand master of the household, was superadded the sovereign disposal of the finances. Neither his talents or amiable qualities seem to have been such, as rendered him worthy of these unparalleled and distinguished favours; and we are surprised to find a man uniformly unfortunate in war, and interested or partial in the cabinet, the minister and most beloved companion of two kings.—His ignorance was extreme, in an age and court where letters were peculiarly honoured and cultivated. His manners, brutal and ferocious, disgusted all who approached him. A temper stern, imperious, unfeeling, rendered him generally odious and dreaded. Courage, loyalty, and adulation cannot be denied him. Francis, naturally discerning, and capable, when not biassed by passion, of forming a just estimate of the human heart and mind, did not always continue to him that friendship and confidence.

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He disgraced, and never would recall or employ him; but neither his conduct or advice could prevent his son from extending to him the same, or even greater honours, which continued without diminution till his death.

In the wish or pretence of inducing Charles and Francis to a final peace, Paul the third, who had succeeded to the pontificate, prevailed on both monarchs to agree to an interview at Nice. They came; but from uncertain motives, either personal or political, did not see each other. The pope, who affected to perform the office of a mediator, could only procure a truce of nine years: but the emperor, at his departure, promised to meet the king at Aigues-Mortes in Languedoc. He came, at the instances of his sister Eleanor; and landing without guards or precaution, waited on his rival, and dined in his tent. The ensuing day Francis returned this mark of confidence by a visit to Charles, and was regaled on board

his galley. Every demonstration of mutual esteem and friendship was interchanged. They embraced, and appeared to have obliterated all their past animosities. — But the emperor, deeply skilled in the subtle mazes of policy, and well acquainted with the character of the king, generous, and, when piqued on his honour, carrying his punctilio to an extreme, foresaw that he should have occasion to request a passage through his dominions; and only wore the semblance of amity and concord, to deceive the more easily and effectually.

On his return from this interview, Francis, who passionately loved the study of nature, and possessed a curiosity of the most elegant and liberal kind, gratified himself by several researches which mark his turn of mind, and are not usual in princes. He made a journey into Dauphiné, a province rich in romantic and singular beauties; in phenomena of various species. He even caused a boat to be constructed for the purpose of exploring a subterranean

subterranean lake, near a village called Notre Dame de la Baulme, on the road from Grenoble to Lyons; and having ventured into it, proceeded a considerable distance on the water: but a strong current, which grew more rapid as they advanced, attended with a noise indicative of a whirlpool, obliged his guides to desist from a farther progress, and to reconduct him to the entrance of the grotto*.

Francis, who had already sacrificed his first queen to his irregular pleasures, experienced in turn the fatal effects of his indiscretion; and was eventually a martyr to the most cruel of all diseases. He became enamoured of a woman, known un-

* This story is incontestably authentic, and occurs in almost all the French historians. I have omitted many circumstances of it, as being too minute. The remains of a boat, said to be that of Francis the first, were yet to be seen some few years since, in the cavern, through which is the passage to the lake. The "Sept merveilles de Dauphiné," are well known, and are yet visited by the curious.

der

der the name of "La belle Feroniere," in history. Her rank and condition are somewhat uncertain. Conscious how dangerous it is to oppose the passions or desires of princes, her husband pretended to submit to his own dishonour: but nourishing the resolution of vengeance, and unable to devise any other expedient, he voluntarily contracted a distemper, which he communicated to his unhappy wife, and she, unknowingly, to the king. The husband administered quick and effectual remedies to his complaint, but "La Feroniere" survived it only a short time. Even Francis, whether from unskilful treatment in his physicians, or neglect, never perfectly recovered this singular punishment. He underwent extreme pain from its effects; and, after dragging on seven or eight years of life, under a continual return of symptoms more and more alarming, expired in the vigour of his age; a melancholy lesson of the dreadful consequences of debauchery, and a proof that

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that no exaltation of dignity can preclude revenge; or shield from jealous indignation*.

But though these were the pernicious attendants on his incontinence, yet was it productive of certain intermediate benefits to the kingdom. Pain and mental anxiety acting constantly on him, gradually affected and changed his disposition. No longer capable of pursuing, as formerly, his appetites, unrestrained, and compelled to a life more temperate and prudent; he renounced his profusion, and became sparing of the re-

* Every writer of Francis's reign relates this extraordinary anecdote; and it is found, though with some unessential variation in minute particulars, in Mezerai, Varillas, Le Calendrier du Pere L'Enfant, Louis Guyon, Buffares, Bayle, and many others.—The portrait of “La belle Feroniere” is yet to be seen in cabinets, and forms one of the beauties in the famous collection of Odieuvre. The most common opinion is, that her husband was a lawyer; but that is not certain.—I think Dr. Burnet relates a similar story of James the second, when duke of York.

venues.

venues.

venues. Favourites, used to the abuse of his bounty, lost their command over him. He applied more seriously to the great business of state; and, becoming splenetic, inaccessible, and reserved, introduced order through all the departments of government.

The rebellion of the inhabitants of Ghent, which took place at this time, served to oppose, in the most striking and eminent point of view, the different genius and character of Charles and Francis. So far was the latter from taking advantage of their insurrection, and offers of submission to him, that he even gave advice of it to the emperor; and granted him a passage through his dominions, without laying him, as he might have done, under any conditions, except those of gratitude and honour. Every attention of the most profound respect, of the most disinterested friendship, was lavishly heaped upon him. The dauphin and duke of Orleans, accompanied by the constable, went to receive him at Bayonne, and even
offered

offered to go as hostages into Spain for the security of his person. The king himself, though exceedingly indisposed by illness, advanced as far as Chatelleraud in Poitou, where they gave each other all the marks of esteem and amity at their rencontre. Honours more than regal were shewn him; all orders of the state vied in their endeavours to welcome his arrival, and to heighten the splendor of his entry into the capital.

It was debated in the cabinet, to improve the occasion, and to compel the emperor by force, if not by benefits, to the restitution of the Milanese, which he had engaged himself by a verbal promise to do, previous to his entry into the kingdom. Montmorenci alone declared against the general sentiment: and, whether influenced by Charles's applauses, who flattered and caressed him to the greatest degree; whether induced to give this counsel from an attachment to the queen Eleanor, or from motives yet more uncertain and concealed;

prevailed on Francis, easily led to comply with the dictates of his native dignity of soul, and scorning the arts of a sordid policy, to lay him under no restriction. He even conducted himself towards the emperor with a delicacy unexampled; accompanied him, on his departure, to St. Quentin, and sent his two sons to attend him to Valenciennes. These accumulated favours were repaid with the meanest breach of his word, with subterfuges and evasions too low for repetition. Charles, who never meant to resign the rich duchy of Milan, and only sought to deceive a rival too honourable for the crooked line of princely conduct, avowed his intention when he no longer feared reprisals; and, like his grandfather Ferdinand, did not blush at a successful perfidy *.

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* There is a curious anecdote on the subject of Charles's passage through France, and escape, in Dupleix, who attributes it almost entirely to the dukes of Epernay. Francis, in presenting his wife

The indignation, mixed with shame, which the king felt at being thus egregiously the dupe of his too scrupulous and unsuspecting honour, roused him from that supine reliance on the counsel of others, which he had hitherto indulged. His penetration made him see, that treachery in his own servants, had been added to the emperor's duplicity, and

treachery to the emperor, said, "Mon frere, cette belle dame me conseille de vous obliger à detruire à Paris l'ouvrage de Madrid;" to which he coldly replied, "Si le conseil en est bon, il faut le suivre." Admired however at this intimation of the duchess's sentiments, and conscious of her power over the king, he determined to exert his whole address to detach her from him. On the ensuing day, when water was offered him to wash, Melancton held the napkin. In pulling off a diamond of prodigious value, which he wore on his finger, he purposely let it drop; and she having taken it up, Charles refused to accept it, adding gallantly, that it too well became the hand where fortune had placed it, to take it away. The duchess was too grateful for the present. — There is an air of fiction and romance in all this; nor can it be much relied on; though it is but too clear that she had intelligence with Charles, in the sequel.

jointly

jointly imposed on his understanding. As he carried his inspection deeper into the arcana of administration, new proofs of the pernicious abuse which his favourites had made of the royal ear or affection, crowded upon him. Pleasure, seductive and fascinating, had ceased to delude his ripened judgment; the cares and duties of a great monarch, anxious for the public weal, succeeded to their empire in his bosom; and the shining virtues which nature had early planted there, but whose growth had been retarded, and lustre dimmed, by a too early accession to the crown, rekindled in an age less susceptible of flattery.

This alteration of sentiment was followed by as total a change of action. The persons to whom the first offices and charges had been confided, were disgraced. Brion, admiral of France, was degraded from his high post; and though the intercession of the duchess of Estampes, to whom he was allied by blood, alleviated the severity

verity of his prosecution and sentence, yet he died the victim of his mortified pride, and humbled fortunes. Royet, the chancellor, was the second sacrifice; and his punishment, more rigorous and extensive, reduced him to penury and extreme distress. His conduct while he held the seals, no less reproachable than Du Prat's, his predecessor, deprived him, in this calamitous condition, of the popular commiseration. These two conspicuous removals only served to prepare a yet greater fall, that of the constable, so long unrivalled in Francis's love. The cause cannot be exactly ascertained, nor can we even positively know whether it was more political, or personal. It is said, that a jealousy of the dauphin's growing attachment to him, gave umbrage to his father, and served to corroborate the other reasons I have enumerated. Montmorenci retired from court, and amused himself in the erection of the castle of Écouen, near St. Denis, during his exile;

nor could the king ever be persuaded to recal or employ him, by any instances or endeavours for that purpose. The cardinal of Tournon, a man of mediocrity of talents, but possessing application, and capacity for business, was invested with the highest employment of state; and the marechal d'Annebaut, who succeeded Brion as admiral, divided with him the king's confidence.

After near two years of intrigue, negotiation, and insidious proposals on the part of the emperor, relative to the pretended resignation of the Milanese in favour of Charles duke of Orleans; Francis, conscious that these measures would never produce the end intended, and irritated by the marquis del Guasto's murder of his two ambassadors to the republic of Venice and Solymán emperor of the Turks, openly took up arms, and renewed the war. He even made efforts of a nature more extraordinary than any during his whole reign. Henry, the dauphin,

phim, was placed at the head of a fine army in the Roussillon, and laid siege to Perpignan, but after a vain attempt, was necessitated to retire without success. His brother Charles, after a much more prosperous campaign in Flanders, abandoned his triumphs in the midway; and, inflamed with the wish to combat the emperor, who was expected to come to the rescue of Perpignan, quitted his troops, and crossed all France to Montpellier, where his father had remained, to wait the event. Scarce any advantageous consequences resulted from these great armaments.

Francis gave at this time an instance of the most amiable clemency, in his treatment of the inhabitants of La Rochelle, who had revolted. After having entered with a great military train into the city, which was incapable of defence, and exposed to his resentment; he first pointed out to them, in an eloquent harangue, the enormity of their crime, and then

pardoned it, without restriction, in the most ample manner.

The king of England, capricious, and the sport of his tumultuous passions, had once more broke with Francis, and renewed his ancient alliance with his rival. The Netherlands became the scene of hostilities; and, though incommoded from illness, he was necessitated to command his forces in person. Luxembourg was taken, but no conquest of importance achieved.

Induced by the pressing solicitations of the king, Solyman the magnificent dispatched the renowned pirate Barbarossa, with a hundred and thirty gallies, to his aid: in conjunction with the French fleet, he laid siege to Nice, but raised it dishonourably; and Francis, covered with the reproaches of all the christian princes, for this union with their common enemy, derived from it scarce any benefit or utility. In Flanders, he was more successful: Charles, who had led a formidable

army into the field, was repulsed before Landrecy, by the valour of the garrison; and after having seized on Cambray, an imperial city, retired into winter quarters.

After ten years of sterility, Catherine of Medecis was at length delivered of a son, who was named Francis, and afterwards ascended the throne. Her character had not yet unveiled and displayed itself: the genius of Francis, and the circumstances of the times, repressed and concealed it. She possessed no political influence, had no seat in the cabinet. Her barrenness contributed to diminish her consequence, and even gave room to some proposals for a dissolution of the marriage, but which were relinquished. Even in this situation, her address was visible: she made the most assiduous and successful court to the king, who began to decline, from his indispositions: she accompanied him to the chace; formed one of that celebrated party, known by the title of

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“ La petite bande de dames de la cour ;” and attended him on his private excursions to Chambord, Fontainebleau, and Madrid, where he laid aside the cares of state, and unbent himself in the company of a select number of his favourites. These complaisant and winning attentions, rendered her infinitely dear to Francis.—To her husband, the dauphin, she was no less submissive : he was already enslaved to Diana de Poitiers, whose faction, opposed to that of madame d’Estampes, divided the court. In this most delicate and critical condition, she yet rendered herself acceptable by a humility and flexibility of conduct rarely found ; and, reserving the latent capacities with which she was endowed for more favourable times, was content to remain in comparative obscurity*.

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* Though certain authors have spoken of the “ Petite bande de dames de la cour,” as a most dissolute and voluptuous association, yet there can be no doubt

The war between the two monarchs was carried on with redoubled violence. Francis had confided the supreme command in Piedmont to the count d'Enguien. This young hero, only twenty-one years of age, had already raised the highest expectations: in him revived the genius of Gaston de Foix; and, like him, his glories were swallowed up by a hasty extinction. Brother to Anthony duke of Vendome, and to Louis prince of Condé so renowned in the unhappy wars of Charles the ninth, his rank entitled him to the highest employments, and his capacity

doubt of the falsity of such an accusation. It is likewise said, that Catherine prevented a divorce between Henry and herself, by the interest of Diana de Poitiers, his mistress, of which she did not scruple to make use; but this is very problematical, and much to be disputed. Uniform tradition, and several contemporary writers, attribute to Fernel, first physician to the king, the merit of rendering her capable of bearing children, by some medical assistance given to her constitution; and there seems every reason to believe it.

made him worthy of them. The battle of Cerizoles, which he gained over the marquis del Gualto, who fled, wounded in the knee, renewed the remembrance of Ravenna's day. All the Milanese would have been the inevitable consequence of this important victory, if urgent necessity had not compelled the king to renounce Italian conquests, in the more pressing exigence of domestic invasion. Charles and Henry entering Picardy with two great armies, menaced France with calamities superior to any she had yet experienced: Had the junction been made which was originally stipulated, the kingdom would probably have been reduced to the verge of ruin: but the emperor's error in laying siege to St. Disier, which detained him more than six weeks—and the king of England's refusal to join him, or desist from his attempt on Boulogne—gave Francis time to provide for the safety of his capital and dominions. He was himself too much enfeebled by his complaints,

to

to head the army in person; which was intrusted to the dauphin. The emperor advancing, spread terror and consternation. Paris, abandoned by its inhabitants, was left almost unpeopled, and presented a scene the most distressful: scarce could the king's arrival calm their agitations, and restore any sort of tranquillity.

Meanwhile his son Henry, active, martial, and warmed with enthusiasm in so great a cause, had reduced Charles, in turn, to the greatest difficulties for want of forage and provisions. He must even, it is probable, have sued for a cessation of arms, or made a difficult and shameful retreat; if the intrigues of the duchess of Estampes had not extricated him from his perilous situation, by a private information of those places where magazines were provided. The motive to this infamous and treasonable conduct in the king's mistress, was her jealousy of the dauphin's glory, and partiality for the

the duke of Orleans; to whom she hoped Charles would resign the Milanese, and under whose protection she flattered herself with a secure asylum after Francis's death. Though her succour had prevented his troops from being destroyed by famine, yet many circumstances hung the fortune of the campaign in suspense: and Henry, panting to signalize his prowess, and shew himself worthy the crown he was destined to inherit, might still have snatched from him the trophies he had gained.—These considerations prevailed on the emperor to propose, or permit the proposal, of a final peace. Two Dominican friars, Diegos Chiavez, and Gabriel de Gusman, were the conductors of this negotiation, which was warmly seconded by Eleanor, Francis's queen. The dauphin, on the other hand, strongly and violently opposed it, as inglorious, unnecessary, and a sacrifice of the national honour to the aggrandisement of his brother, the only object intended by the contrary

trary faction. The king, after some irresolution, ranged himself on the side of his youngest son, for whom he indulged a partial fondness.—The treaty was, in consequence, less calculated for public benefit, than that of the duke of Orleans, to whom the emperor promised his daughter, with the Low Countries or Milanese in dowry, within two years. A contingent and future advantage; in return for which Francis resigned almost all his conquests in Savoy or Piedmont; and which Charles never accomplished!—Henry the dauphin protested publicly against this treaty, so injurious to his interests.

The capture of Boulogne, which had fallen into the king of England's hands, had served to hasten its conclusion; and Francis, anxious for the recovery of so important a place, not only sent his eldest son to form the siege of it, but advanced in person, accompanied by his youngest, to the abbey of Foret-Mauviel, ten leagues

leagues distant, between Abbeville and Montreuil. Here he was again overwhelmed by a new affliction, to which he was infinitely sensible; the death of the duke of Orleans. This prince was the unhappy victim of his own puerile temerity and want of consideration. The plague had appeared in the environs of the village where the king was lodged: his son, notwithstanding the entreaties and remonstrances of his attendants, persisted to sleep in a house said to be infected; alledging, that in the annals of the monarchy was there no instance of a son of France who had died of the plague. He even carried his fatal indiscretion to a yet more extraordinary length; and having pulled out the bedding said to be tainted, ran up and down covered with the feathers. He was seized almost immediately with the distemper predicted, and expired soon after. His unfortunate parent fainted at the mournful news of the loss of this favourite child, for whom he had with

so much care provided a rich inheritance.

The duke of Orleans was only twenty-three years old : in person he resembled Francis more than either of his elder sons, and was the handsomest of his three children. He had no bodily defect, except that the small-pox had injured one of his eyes ; but even this was not discernible. As the features of his face bore a peculiar similarity to those of his father, so did the leading strokes of his character. Lively, animated, courageous, active, and incapable of disguise or reserve : but with those errors and foibles which commonly characterize youth ; presumption, warmth, and vanity. He was doubtless a prince of high expectations, if the rivalry and avowed animosity between him and the dauphin had not rendered it too probable, that after Francis's death the brothers would no longer preserve any measures. The emperor fomented this dissension ; and, by an affected predilection for,

for, and preference of him, instilled deeper suspicions into Henry's bosom; so that perhaps his untimely end was not injurious to the state, however calamitous and oppressive to the father.—Charles immediately declared, that by this accident he held himself acquitted from his promise relative to the Milanese; and refused any resignation or investiture of it.

The death of the count d'Enguien, who had so lately acquired an immortal renown in Italy, and whose age was almost exactly the same with that of the prince deceased, renewed the grief of Francis, who wept his loss in the deepest sorrow. There is an ambiguity spread over this event, hard to penetrate. The count was engaged at play with the youth of the court. It was at La Roche-sur-Yonne: a coffer thrown purposely from a window on his head, killed him on the spot. Cornelio Bentivoglio, an Italian nobleman, with whom he previously had some dispute, was accused of this detestable
and

and cowardly action: but the king would not permit the affair to be minutely examined, or any disquisition entered into, from the fear of finding that the dauphin was privy to, or involved in the crime.

A peace, long wished for by the two kings of France and England, at length took place. Henry promised to restore Boulogne in eight years, on condition of a certain annual sum; and Francis, released from this object of attention, bent all his cares to the empire, where Charles had openly attempted to establish an unlimited power.

As he approached the termination of his life, the violence of the two parties, which divided the court, redoubled. The duchess of Estampes had endeavoured to spread a report, that Diana de Poitiers was the cause of the duke of Orleans's death, by the administration of poison. To this cruel imputation, she had added many contemptuous expressions on the decay of her personal charms; and openly declared,

that the year of Diana's marriage was that of her own birth. The dauphin, in revenge for these aspersions on his mistress's fame, had indulged himself in some very severe and pointed sarcasms on the duchess's fidelity. He even presumed to assert, that she consoled herself for his father's sickness in the arms of another; and he named the celebrated Guy Chabot, Seigneur de Jarnac, as the person, tho' he was nearly allied to her, having married her sister. This accusation reached the king's ear, who highly resented it, and would have rigorously punished the author, had not his name been concealed. Jarnac denied the fact; which La Chataigneraye, a favourite of the dauphin's, protested he had communicated to him; and from this source originated the famous duel which took place on Henry the second's accession*.

We

* It was not only with Jarnac, that madame d'Estampes has been accused of infidelity. The count de Boffe,

We draw towards the close of this great reign. Henry the eighth of England's death alarmed and disquieted the king; he had long known him, and a degree of distant analogy and resemblance in their characters, had united them to each other, in defiance of their frequent wars and jarring interests. Francis caused a re-

Bossu, and the Seigneur de Dampierre, have been likewise named; but none of these are proved, and probably only originated from the dauphin and his mistress's hatred. Even Brantome, partial to his uncle La Châtaigneraie, only insinuates, that the duchess was not strictly faithful to Francis, as he did not pique himself on his fidelity to her. It was not her personal, but political conduct, which rendered her obnoxious to Henry; who, after his father's death, protested against the abuse which she had made of her influence over him, and added publicly the prosecution against her.—There have been authors so absurd as to pretend, that Francis never had any other connections with her than those of mind, during two-and-twenty years: it would be ridiculous to attempt to disprove this formally. The complexion of the king, amorous and warm; the beauty, and many attractions of the duchess, refute it sufficiently.

quiem and service to be said for the repose
 of his soul, though he died excommuni-
 cated, and without the pale of the church.
 He considered it as a prognostic of his own
 approaching end, and was deeply affected
 by it. No effectual remedies could be ad-
 ministered to his disease, which was grown
 inveterate : his uneasiness and anxiety of
 mind encreased its virulence. He wan-
 dered from one palace to another, depress-
 ed and languid. A slow fever, produced
 by corporal and intellectual pain, began
 to waste his already exhausted constitu-
 tion ; and at length, becoming more vio-
 lent and continued, forced him to stop at
 the little chateau of Rambouillet. Here,
 finding himself worse, and resigning the
 hope of life, he sent for his son Henry,
 that he might address to him his dying
 words. They were worthy a great king
 expiring.—He admonished him, that
 children should imitate the virtues, and
 not the vices of their parents ; that the
 French people, as the most loyal and li-
 beral

beal of any in the world to their sove-
 reigns, merited in return to be protected,
 not oppressed by them. He recommended
 to him, in terms the most forcible and
 persuasive, the diminution of the imposts
 and taxes, which continual wars had
 forced him to encrease to an unprece-
 dented height. He requested him never
 to recall Montmorenci; and to continue
 the cardinal of Tournon, and the ma-
 réchal d'Annebaut in the ministry, as vir-
 tuous and disinterested statesmen. Henry
 shewed little deference to these counsels,
 when he ascended the throne. His fa-
 ther did not survive much longer: the
 perfect possession of his understanding
 and speech accompanied him to the last
 moment: he expired at length, aged only
 fifty-two years, of which he had reigned
 thirty-two. The magnificence which had
 distinguished him through life, did not
 forsake him even in death: his funeral
 obsequies were performed with unusual

pomp, and attended by eleven cardinals, a thing unprecedented in France!

I have been irresistibly and insensibly drawn into too minute a narration of Francis's reign, to render it necessary to be equally diffuse in the description of his character. Such are the principal strokes of it, that they cannot be mistaken. We shall love and admire his magnanimity, his clemency, his munificence, his romantic and scrupulous honour. We shall confess and respect his capacity, his courage, his protection of genius and the arts, his heroism and fortitude.—We shall pity, and hide beneath the veil of candour and humanity, his profusion, his want of application, his too great subserviency to ministers, favourites, and mistresses, who abused his bounty.—No prince of the age in which he lived, interests so deeply; none was so much celebrated, and the subject of such universal panegyric. Though usually unsuccessful in his wars, he yet ac-

quired more glory than the emperor his competitor; and Francis is more truly great after the defeat of Pavia, or in the castle of Madrid, than Charles triumphant, and imposing conditions on his prisoner. His largesses, his princely liberality, his condescending attentions to men distinguished by their superior merit, acquired him a fame not inferior to Leo the tenth, and less ostentatious than that of Louis the fourteenth. We all know that Leonardo-da-Vinci expired in his arms, from the effort he made to express his sense of the honours done him by so august a monarch.

No European court vied with that of Francis in brilliance and lustre. He was himself the animating soul, which diffused a radiance over it.—During the last ten years of his life, his character rises upon the view. Notwithstanding all the previous disorder in the finances, notwithstanding the numerous and splendid palaces he erected, the donations he made,

the collections of paintings and other monuments of art which he purchased, the incessant wars he sustained; yet at his death the royal domain was free, a vast sum in the treasury, and a quarter of his revenues ready to enter it.—His very foibles and errors were such as mark a feeling and generous bosom; such as we pardon while we censure. His promiscuous amours carried with them their own punishment, and conducted him to the tomb untimely, before age had diminished his faculties or powers. To Henry the fourth he bears a striking resemblance; and this latter prince, so worthy of immortal praise, was flattered and charmed with the comparison of himself to Francis, whom he imitated and emulated. The proclamation in the hall of the palace, which announced his death, was couched in these words: “ Prince clement en paix, victorieux en guerre, pere et restaurateur des bonnes lettres, et des arts liberaux.” An eulogium great and dazzling, but yet far unequal,

unequal, in real and intrinsic dignity, to that conferred on his predecessor !

By Eleanor, his second wife, he never had any issue ; and on his decease she retired first into the Netherlands, and afterwards into Spain ; in which country she died, at Talavera, near Badajox, eleven years after her husband. We know not that Francis had any children by either of his most celebrated mistresses, madame de Chateau-Briand, and the duchess of Estampes *.

* Brantome has mentioned a certain " Villecouvin," as his illegitimate son ; but this is very dubious.—It is curious to find in the Jesuit Garasse, and in Sanderus, that Anne Boleyn is accused of having been one of Francis's mistresses. They not only vilify her character by invectives the most illiberal ; but describe her person in language so extraordinary, that I cannot help copying it from the latter of these writers.—" Anne de Boleyn avoit six " doigts à la main droite ; le visage long, jaune, " comme si elle eut eu les pales couleurs ; et une " loupe sous la gorge."—Is this the beautiful Anne Boleyn ? It is at least impossible to recognize her under these frightful and ridiculous colours.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

The Character of Henry the second.—Changes in the state.—Diana de Poitiers.—Her character.—Romantic attachment of the king.—Disgrace of the duchess of Estampes.—Duel of Jarnac and La Chataigneraie.—Insurrections in Guyenne.—Persecution of the protestants.—Death of Margaret of Valois, queen of Navarre.—Character.—War renewed between Henry and the Emperor.—Catherine of Medicis left regent.—Siege of Metz.—War continued.—The Emperor abdicates.—Power of Diana duchess of Valentinois.—The duke of Guise sent against Naples.—Battle of St. Quentin.—Capture of Calais.—Marriage of Francis the dauphin, to Mary of Scotland.—Circumstances.—Peace concluded.—Carousals of the court.—The king's unexpected death.—Enumeration of

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of the circumstances which attended it.—

*Character of Henry the second.—Mis-
resses.—Reflections.*

THOUGH the death of so great a prince as Francis the first, at a period of life when his character promised happiness and tranquillity to his people, was an event deeply to be lamented by those to whom the interests of the state were dear; yet as his successor had attained to years of manhood, and did not appear to be deficient in the qualities requisite for government, his loss might be deemed not irreparable.

Henry the second, who ascended the throne, was the handsomest monarch of his age, and the most accomplished cavalier in his dominions. He surpassed in all the martial exercises where vigour and address are necessary; and bore away the prize in tournaments with distinguished grace. His heart was beneficent and humane; his temper courteous, open, and liberal.

liberal. His intentions were ever honourable, and directed to the public good; but he neither possessed the capacity or discernment which Francis eminently discovered: and, naturally tractable, and yielding to others, was formed to be under the guidance of favourites.

His father's dying exhortations had made no impression on his heart, produced no effect on his conduct. Scarce were his funeral rites performed, when he violated them in every point. Montmorenci, who had been during several years in disgrace, was recalled, and loaded with honours. The admiral d'Annebaut was dismissed, and the cardinal of Tournon only retained a shadow of authority. In their place, Francis duke of Guise, so celebrated in the subsequent reigns, and the marshal de St. André, were substituted. That pernicious profusion, which had characterised the commencement of the late king's government, was carried to a more unjustifiable length; and the treasures

facts amassed during his concluding years, were dissipated with a wanton extravagance.

Diana de Poitiers, who may be said to have divided the crown with her lover, and who carried her influence, personal and political, to a pitch which madame d'Etampes never could attain, was the directing principle of Henry's councils, the object of his tenderest attachment, and unlimited homage. This extraordinary woman, unparalleled in the annals of history, retained her beauty undiminished even in the autumn of life, and preserved her powers of enslaving, of fascinating, in defiance of time and natural decay. She was already forty-eight, while Henry had scarce attained his twenty-ninth year. Her father, John de Poitiers, Seigneur de St. Vallier, had been condemned to die as an accomplice in the revolt of the constable Charles of Bourbon; and though he escaped with life, yet he was degraded from the nobility, and all his fortunes

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confiscated.

confiscated *. She was married, in the last year of Louis the twelfth's reign, to Louis de Brezé, count de Maulevrier, and grand senechal of Normandy; by whom she had two daughters still alive. It is not certain when her connections with the dauphin first commenced; but it appears, that before he had completed his eighteenth year, her ascendancy over him was well established. All the contemporary authors agree in their assurances, that her

* Mezerai, the president Henault, and many other writers, have asserted, that she was the instrument of her father's preservation, by the sacrifice of her chastity to Francis the first; from whose embraces she passed into those of his son: but this is very dubious, not to say certainly mistaken. She had been married near ten years at that time, and consequently had not, as those authors seem to imagine, her *virgin honour* to give. Besides, though her father's life was not taken, his punishment was commuted for another, worse than death; that of being immured perpetually between four walls, in which there should be only one little window, through which his provisions might be given him. St. Vallier died of a fever, produced by terror, in a very short time afterwards.

charms

charms were of the most captivating kind, and worthy a monarch's love. To these corporal endowments, she united a cultivated and just understanding, wit, and an animated conversation. Warmly devoted to her friends and partizans, she was a dangerous and implacable enemy: of high and unsubmitting spirit, she transfused those sentiments into the royal bosom, and impelled him to actions of vigour and firmness. Fond of power, she was yet more so of flattery and submission. The nobles crouded to express their dutiful attentions to this idol; and even the constable, rude, haughty, and more accustomed to insult than flatter, bent beneath her, and condescended to ingratiate himself by the meanest adulation.

The ties which chiefly bound Henry to her, were probably first those of pleasure and voluptuous enjoyment; and afterwards habit, taste, and prescription. In vain did the duchess of Estampes exert every art of female rivalry and hatred, to separate
and

and disunite them: in vain did she publish, that Diana was married in the same year which gave herself birth.—These efforts only encreased the passion they were designed to extinguish. The king carried it to an incredible and romantic length; he gave her every public, as well as private proof of her empire over him. The furniture of his palaces, his armour, the public edifices, were all distinguished with her device and emblems; a moon, bow, and arrows. Every favour or preferment was obtained thro' her interest; and Brissac, the most amiable and gallant nobleman of the court, said to be peculiarly acceptable to her, was created grand master of the artillery, at her particular request.—The Count de Bossu, who had been intimately connected with the late king's mistress, and was accused of treasonable practices with the emperor, could only shelter himself from punishment by a resignation of his palace at Marchez to the cardinal of Lorraine. The duchess of Estampes, unsupported

ported by the croud of flatterers who attended on her in Francis's reign, was necessitated to quit the court;—but Diana, whether from motives of prudence or magnanimity, did not attempt to despoil her of the possessions she had acquired from the late king's generosity. Disgraced, and forsaken, she retired to one of her country houses, where she lived many years in total obscurity*.

Henry having returned from a visit which he made to the frontier of Picardy, not only permitted, but was present with all his courtiers at the celebrated duel between Jarnac and La Chataigneraie. It was decided at St. Germain-en-Laye. The quarrel had originated from the ac-

* It is somewhat extraordinary, that the year of Madame d'Effampes's death is not mentioned by any cotemporary author. All we know is, that she was yet alive in 1575; as she did homage at that time for one of her estates. She became a protectress to the Lutherans or Hugonots, for whom she had always a concealed affection; and this is the only circumstance we are acquainted with of her retreat.

cusation

causation of the latter respecting Madame
 d'Estampes's infidelity; and was increased
 by a second imputation, still more disho-
 nourable to Jarnac, that of having been
 criminally intimate with his father's second
 wife. La Chataigneraie was one of the
 most accomplished cavaliers, and most ac-
 ceptable to the king, of any in his do-
 minions. Skilled in the practice of arms,
 vain of his acknowledged address, relying
 on the royal favour, and elated with so
 many advantages, he despised his anta-
 gonist; and vaunted to his mistress, that
 he would present her a "Tete de
 Chabot," alluding to Jarnac's family
 name. He, more cautious, and neither
 supported by superior force, or stimu-
 lated by the regal patronage, endeav-
 oured to supply these defects by artificial
 aid. A fever had diminished even his
 usual strength and activity; but the pre-
 sumptuous negligence of La Chataigneraie
 decided the duel in his honour. By a
 stroke totally unexpected, he wounded
 him

him in the ham, and threw him to the ground. Henry instantly flung down his baton, to suspend the engagement: Jarrac, as the law of arms required, desisted; but his competitor, stung with disappointment, covered with shame, and incapable of surviving these accumulated mortifications, would not accept of a life which he deemed ignominious; and having torn off the bandages applied to his wounds, expired soon after. The king was so deeply touched with this combat, and its event, so opposite to his wishes and expectations, that he made a solemn vow, never, during his reign, to permit a second, on whatever pretext.

The sources of future wars, unextinguished by the death of Francis, began to generate between the emperor and Henry; though as yet many circumstances conduced to retard and protract an open rupture. This latter prince made a progress through part of his dominions, attended with splendid entries into the prin-

cipal cities; and on his return he celebrated the nuptials of Anthony duke of Vendome with Jane d'Albret, heiress of the kingdom of Navarre, at the city of Moulins*.

A dan-

* The young princess had been espoused several years before to the duke of Cleves. Francis the first was present at this ceremony, which was performed with great splendor at Chatelleraud in Poictou: but the marriage was not consummated, on account of her extreme youth, she being at that time little more than twelve years old. The day was rendered remarkable by the dismissal and disgrace of the constable Montmorenci; which was preceded by a very singular circumstance, supposed to foretel his approaching fall. The bride, according to the manners of the age, was habited in robes so weighty, and charged with many pearls and jewels, that not being able to move, Francis commanded the constable to take her in his arms, and carry her to the church. Though this custom was usual at the nuptials of great persons, yet Montmorenci was deeply hurt by being selected for such an office; and regarding it as an incontestible proof of his ruin, hesitated not to declare to his friends, that his favour was at an end. The event justified his suspicion; for immediately after the banquet, the king dismissed him from his service,

and

A dangerous insurrection, which broke out at this time in Guienne, rendering it necessary to send into the province some general of rank and experience, the duke of Guise, and the constable were both

and he quitted the court directly. Margaret of Valois, queen of Navarre, and mother to Jané d'Albret, was supposed, by her interest with her brother, to have accelerated his downfall. The constable had not scrupled to accuse her to Francis, of being attached to, and protecting, the Hugonots. By this imputation against his beloved sister, he offended the king, and raised up an implacable and powerful enemy in Margaret herself.

The marriage of Jane with the duke of Cleves, which had been chiefly made in compliance with the wishes of Francis the first, was afterwards broken from motives of policy, on his death. But Brantome says, that Anthony duke of Vendome had great scruples of delicacy relative to espousing the princess; and had recourse to the senechale of Poitou, who was at the time of her first nuptials a lady of honour to the queen of Navarre, to clear up his suspicions.—She did so; and gave him the most solemn and satisfactory proofs, that her first marriage had been merely a ceremony; to which, as reasons of state gave rise, so opposite ones might equally dissolve it at pleasure.

charged with that commission. The former, courteous, humane, and passionately desirous to conciliate popular favour, entered Saintonge and Angoumois, dispensing pardon, or only punishing with lenity and gentleness; but Montmorency, stern, inexorable, and with a severity of temper which approached to cruelty, marked his course along the Garonne with blood; and, deaf to the supplications of the inhabitants, who had recourse to submissions and deprecations, put to death above a hundred of the principal citizens of Bourdeaux, and deprived the city of all its municipal rites and privileges. A conduct so opposite, produced sentiments equally dissimilar in respect to the two commanders; and from this era the family of Guise began to date that popularity, which in the sequel they carried to so prodigious and dangerous a length against the crown itself.

The court meanwhile was immersed in carousals and festivities: A gallant and martial

marial prince, who delighted in exertions of prowess and dexterity, was naturally followed in those diversions by his nobility. Diana de Poitiers, created duchess of Valentinois, presided at these entertainments, designed in her honour; and the queen, tho' young and beautiful; tho' of uncommon capacity, and endowed with dissimulation, and manners the most temporising, yet acted only an inferior and subservient part. She had however the satisfaction of being crowned at St. Denis; and of making afterwards a triumphal entry with her husband into the capital: but these were only pageantries of state; and Henry, who never admitted her to a participation of his authority, seems to have been aware, that her character and genius were more calculated to embroil, than administer any remedy to the affairs of government.

By a transition wondrous and inexplicable, if any thing in human nature can be esteemed so, these tournaments and enter-

tainments were immediately succeeded by exhibitions of a very different nature, but not less frequented. — Mistaken piety, a principle the most pernicious, and ever including a savage and intemperate zeal which delights in blood, was substituted in the place of gallantry and pleasure. A number of profelytes to the doctrines of Luther and Calvin were burnt, as an example to their companions. The king and his courtiers were present at these inhuman sacrifices, which were performed with a refinement of merciless cruelty, and varied in many species; but it is said he was so affected by the dreadful cries of one of his valets de chambre, at whose execution he attended, that he quitted the place, overcome with horror; and, during his whole remaining life, so strongly were the torments imprinted on his imagination, that he trembled at the recollection, and was seized with remorse of the most poignant nature,

Margaret of Valois, queen of Navarre,
died

died nearly about this time, at the castle of Odoz in Bigorre. She had never recovered the affecting news of her beloved brother's death. If Francis the first was the greatest monarch of his age, Margaret was indisputably the most accomplished princess. Devoted to the love of letters, she encouraged and patronized their authors; from whom she received the flattering epithets of, "the Tenth Muse," and "the Fourth Grace." Herself an author, she has left us proofs the most incontestible of her elegant genius, her wit, and negligent style, full of beauty. Suspected of Hugonotism, she was suspected of gallantry likewise; and perhaps might have been equally sensible in turn to those grand movements of elevated minds, devotion and love. Her Tales, scarce inferior to those of Boccacio, seem to confirm this sentiment; and tho' they ever inculcate and commend the virtues of chastity and female fidelity, yet contain in certain parts an animation, and warmth of colouring, which give room

to suppose the writer of them fully sensible to the delights of the passion, he stood and condemned*.

Boulogne,

* Bonnavet, presuming on his personal attractions, concealed himself under her bed, and attempted to violate her honour. She repulsed him, tore off the skin from his face with her nails, and afterwards complained to the king her brother of this daring attempt; but he only laughed at it. She has related this adventure, somewhat enigmatically, among her Tales.—Tho' sometimes so devout as to compose hymns, yet she was certainly an "Esprit fort;" since she had great doubts concerning the immortality of the soul. Brantôme has preserved a very curious story relative to the death of one of her maids of honour, at which she was present. The queen was much attached to her, and could not be induced by any entreaties to quit her bed-side, when expiring. On the contrary, she continued to fix her eyes on the dying person with uncommon eagerness and perseverance, till she had breathed her last. The ladies of her court expressed to her majesty their astonishment and surprise at this conduct; and requested to know, what satisfaction she could derive from so close an inspection of the agonies of death? Her answer marked a most daring and inquisitive mind. She said, "that having often heard
" the

Boulogne, long besieged, was at length surrendered to France, from the weakness and

“ the most learned doctors and ecclesiastics assert, that
 “ on the extinction of the body, the immortal part
 “ was set at liberty, and unloosed; she could not
 “ restrain her anxious curiosity to observe if any
 “ symptoms or indications of such a separation were
 “ visible or discernible: that none such she had been
 “ able in any degree to discover; and that, if she was
 “ not happily very firm in her faith and adherence to
 “ the catholic religion, she should not know what to
 “ think of this pretended departure of the soul.”

Francis the first took a pleasure in publicly declaring, that to her tenderness, care, and attentions, he was indebted for his life, during the severe illness he underwent in his confinement at Madrid. She had the boldness and spirit to reproach the emperor and his council, in terms the most animated, for their unmanly and cruel treatment of the king. It is said, that Charles was so much irritated by these reprehensions, which he was conscious he merited, that he had intended to seize on her person, and detain her prisoner, if she had outstayed the time granted her to remain in the Spanish dominions. Margaret received intimation of this design; and, without being in the least dismayed, mounted on horseback, crossed the provinces between Madrid and France, and arrived on the frontier

and dissensions common to a minority, Edward the sixth, king of England, being in very early youth, and his uncle the protector's authority precarious and ill established.—The house of Guise, firmly united with Diana duchess of Valentinois, continued to aggrandise itself, and gained every year some new establishment. The genius and great qualities of the duke and cardinal, widely opposite, but equally pre-

frontier a very few hours before the expiration of her safe-conduct.

She was seized, says Brantome, with a catarrh, of which she died, while she was intently gazing on a comet, supposed to predict pope Paul the third's exit. Her illness lasted eight days. She seems to have had the same constitutional dread and terror of death, which characterised her mother Louise. The ladies who attended her announcing to her, when in extremity, that she must prepare herself for her end, and fix her thoughts on the joys of a celestial state; "Tout cela est vrai," replied the expiring queen; "mais nous demeurons si long temps en terre avant que venir la."—She was above two years older than Francis the first; and fifty-eight at the time of her decease.

eminent

eminent and distinguished, eclipsed all other merit: even the constable, tho' superior to any rival in the royal favour, and possessing unlimited influence, yet could not regard unmoved the rapid progress they made in universal admiration, and beheld with jealousy these new competitors for fame and glory.

Italy, destined during more than half a century to be the principal scene of war, again exhibited indications of approaching hostilities. The grandsons of the late pontiff Paul the third, against whom Julius the third, newly elected, had taken up arms, and endeavoured to dispossess them of the duchy of Parma; claimed the protection of Henry, who gladly afforded it to them. He was charmed to find an occasion for again interfering in the affairs beyond the Alps, and of consequence renewing his attempts on the Milanese, so long and so unfortunately contested by the French. Brissac was sent into Piedmont, and instructed to assist the duke of
Parma,

Parma, tho' without any open denuncia-
tion against the emperor. Julius, after an
ineffectual attempt to induce the king to
relinquish his allies, made an unsuccessful an-
nual effort upon the city, the siege of which his
general was obliged to raise.

Charles, though he had scarce passed
his fiftieth year, was already oppressed
with all the maladies and infirmities of
age. Solymán, his great and constant an-
tagonist, menaced the Hungarian domi-
nions. He had alarmed all the princes
of the empire, by his imprisonment of
the landgrave of Hesse, and his open
infringement of the Germanic rights and
liberties. Even his brother Ferdinand
was justly irritated, by his endeavours to
compel him to resign the succession of the
Imperial crown to Philip prince of Spain,
his son.—These united considerations in-
duced Henry no longer to dissemble, or
delay a rupture with him. Brissac began
the campaign in Piedmont, while An-
thony duke of Vendôme entered Artois
and

and Hainault. The king strengthened himself by a secret alliance with Maurice duke of Saxony, head of the protestant league; whom he promised to assist with troops and money against Charles, who evidently aimed at despotism.

The effects of this confederacy were soon visible, in the extraordinary and rapid march of Maurice; who had nearly taken the emperor prisoner in Inspruck, while he amused him with proposals of peace. Charles, terrified, amazed, and on the brink of a shameful captivity, fled in a litter by torch-light over the mountains, meanly accompanied; and scarce imagined himself in security at Villach in Carinthia, upon the frontier of the Venetian territories. Henry, improving this favourable juncture, marched in person into Lorraine; and having first possessed himself of the young duke's person, seized on the cities of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, which, as depending of the empire, were unapprehensive of, and unprepared for

such an attack. These important acquisitions have remained unalterably to France.

Previous to his departure, he vested the regency in the queen, though he at the same time almost associated with her Bertrandi, keeper of the seals, and implicitly devoted to the duchess of Valentinois. Catherine, during the short time in which the administration was entrusted to her, was not guilty of any act injurious to her own character, or the interests of state. That complicated and intriguing genius, that perplexed and pernicious policy, those flattering but ruinous artifices, which so eminently marked her under the reigns of her three children, were as yet unexerted, or unobserved. Accommodating, and mistress of her feelings, she bent beneath madame de Valentinois's superior power; and, so far from making any efforts to diminish or invalidate it, professed for her the most strict and disinterested friendship.

Maurice's

Maurice's success and masterly conduct soon reduced the emperor to a necessity of complying with his offers of peace: and a treaty was signed, which for ever guaranteed and secured the independence of the German princes, ecclesiastical and civil. Charles hastened, and gladly accepted these overtures, from the desire of revenge on the king of France. The insult and indignity offered him, in the full zenith of his prosperity, by the capture of three great cities under the Imperial protection, stung him with the acutest sensations; and, listening only to his anger, he levied a prodigious army, in the resolution of laying immediate siege to Metz. The season was already far advanced, and it was on the eighteenth day of October when he commenced his attack of it. As the place was however of vast circuit, and surrounded with fortifications weak and ruinous, he would probably have rendered himself master of it, if the uncommon exertion of military skill

skill and virtue in the duke of Guise had not frustrated his efforts. This great prince, endowed with every talent of a courtier and a warrior, had thrown himself into it; and withstood the emperor's assaults with undismayed intrepidity, and unshaken perseverance. Winter, accompanied with snows and the rigours of cold, aided his valour, and conduced to destroy the Imperial forces. On the first of January Charles dislodged, after having lost thirty thousand soldiers, and began his retreat—if such it could be denominated. That across the Alps, after the unfortunate campaign of Provence, was infinitely less disastrous and miserable than the present: and the duke of Guise's humanity and care towards the numbers of unhappy wretches who fell into his hands, from the incapacity of accompanying their commander in his flight, shone as conspicuously as his courage had done during the siege, and rendered his fame immortal.

In

In Piedmont the war was feebly supported between Brissac and Ferdinand de Gonzague. Solyman, the firm ally of Henry, as he had been of Francis, aided him with his fleets; and by intrigue he gained possession of Sienna; a place which, had it been preserved, would have aided and facilitated, in the greatest degree, any attempts on the Milanese, or the kingdom of Naples.

The spring saw the emperor again in the field. Animated with shame, and anxious to repair his past defeats, he re-entered France. Terouenne, which resisted his attacks, first felt the weight of his vengeance. He took, and utterly demolished it: Francis de Montmorenci, the constable's eldest son, who had gallantly defended it, remained a prisoner. Emanuel Philibert, the young duke of Savoy, commanded Charles's forces, and began already to display that heroism and martial capacity, which afterwards so eminently distinguished him. He besieged

Hesdin, which capitulated; but while the articles were under agitation, a grenade thrown by a priest into the town, set fire to a mine, under the ruins of which, Horace Farnese, duke of Castro, grandson to Paul the third, and who had married Diana *, the king's natural daughter, was destroyed with fifty others.—On the other hand, the constable, to whom Henry had committed all his army, performed scarce any exploits worthy an enumeration; and his illness, which followed, put an end to the campaign, and carried his troops into winter quarters.

The death of young Edward, king of England, interrupted the harmony between the

* She was one of the most amiable, accomplished, and beautiful princesses who have appeared in France. Her mother's name was Philippa Duc, of Montcail-lier in Piedmont. She was infinitely dear to Henry her father, and not less so to the three succeeding kings her brothers. When left a widow by the duke of Castro's death, she was only fourteen years old. Her name occurs frequently in the narration of Henry the third's life and reign.

two crowns. Mary, who succeeded, in opposition equally to the wishes of her people, and of Henry, espoused Philip, the emperor's son. This union, as it encreased the influence and power of Charles's house, was little calculated to diminish the king of France's jealousy, or accelerate a peace. On the contrary, both sides prepared anew for war. The emperor, though disabled by the gout, which had contracted the sinews of one of his legs, and rendered him incapable of using an arm, appeared once more in the field. Henry, who had ever studiously sought the occasion of combating in person his great antagonist, endeavoured to provoke him to a general engagement. He ravaged Hainault, Brabant, and the Cambresis ; demolished Mariemont, a palace of pleasure belonging to Mary queen of Hungary, and governess of the Low Countries ; and razed the magnificent castle of Bins, which she had lately erected.—Charles marched to

the relief of Renty, besieged by the French; and a rude skirmish ensued, in which the Imperial forces were obliged to retreat, after a considerable loss of men and artillery. The place resisted notwithstanding; and the king, leaving part of his army to the duke of Vendome, dismissed the remainder, and returned to Paris. Some inconsiderable conquests which Charles effected, terminated his military exploits, and put an end to all his campaigns.

In Italy, Sienna was lost, after a long and obstinate defence against the Spaniards; but Brissac maintained the national honour in Piedmont, though ill supported by the court, and opposed by the duke of Alva, who vainly and impotently menaced to drive him over the mountains. This gallant commander would even have relieved Sienna, and forced the enemy to raise the siege, if the opposition of Montmorenci and the Guises, jealous of his glory, had not frustrated his intentions. Mary, Queen of England, attempted to mediate an accommodation

commodation between the contending princes, and a congress was held in a splendid tent near Calais for that purpose; but it produced no beneficial consequences.

The death of Henry d'Albret, king of Navarre, who expired at Hagetmau in Bearn, left his crown and little dominions exposed to the seizure of the French monarch; but the diligence of Anthony duke of Vendome, who had married Jane, heiress to the kingdom, preserved it entire. The king, who had intended to re-unite this small domain to France, by a donation of other lands to Anthony, was highly offended at his conduct; and refusing the government of Picardy to his brother Louis, prince of Condé, conferred it on Coligny.

The emperor, chagrined and mortified at the decline of his lustre, and the successes of Henry; oppressed with diseases, and perhaps tinctured with some of his

mother's * more deplorable and remediless disorders ; determined to resign all his vast possessions to Philip his son. He executed this extraordinary renunciation at Brussels, with the reserve of the imperial dignity, which he retained a year longer.

The profusion and magnificence of the court, superadded to the wars sustained against enemies so powerful, rendered it necessary to encrease the revenues, by additional taxes burdensome and oppressive to the people. Madame de Valentinois

* This miserable princess only finished her life six months before the emperor's abdication. She survived her husband, the archduke Philip, forty-nine years, and was above seventy at her own decease. Her attachment to him, and his untimely death, chiefly contributed to deprive her of her intellects. She was shut up in the castle of Tordeillas, almost abandoned, sleeping upon straw, which she sometimes wanted. Her only recreation was to fight with cats, and to crawl up the tapestry with which her apartments were hung. Such was the lamentable destiny of Ferdinand and Isabella's daughter ; of the mother of two emperors, and four queens !

was

was chiefly accused as the source of these enactments. So far was her influence from any decline, that every year confirmed and extended it. Henry, flexible and easily led by those he loved, only acted through his mistress.—She erected the superb palace of Anet*, to which the two lovers frequently retired, and which was the chief scene of their amorous pleasures. Unable to account for so wondrous and unexampled an attachment, in persons of such unequal ages, the nation attributed it to

* Anet yet exhibits the remains of splendor and elegance. It is situated near Dreux, in the Isle of France. The emblems and devices of the duchess of Valentinois are visible in every part of the building, Voltaire has immortalised it, in these beautiful lines of the ninth canto of his *Henriade*. Love is described as on his way to the plain of Ivry,

“ Il voit les murs d’Anet bâtis aux bords de l’Eure
 “ Lui-même en ordonna la superbe structure ;
 “ Par ses adroites Mains, avec art enlacés,
 “ Les Chiffres de Diane y sont encore tracés ;
 “ Sur sa tombe, en passant, les plaisirs et les grâces
 “ Repandirent les fleurs qui naissoient sur leurs
 “ traces.”

forcery, and supernatural causes. It was reported that the duchess wore magical rings, which equally prevented the decay and diminution of her own beauty, or of the monarch's passion.—Catherine of Medicis supported and confirmed this absurd assertion, which soothed her vanity, by accounting for her rival's triumph*.

The

* Monsieur de Thou, though so judicious and able an historian, was not superior to this weakness, characteristic of the age in which he lived; and very gravely mentions as a fact, the magic powers of which Diana availed herself, to perpetuate and support her ascendancy over Henry.—Brantome knew her personally, and has given a minute description of her beauty, in its most advanced period. The passage is too curious and extraordinary to pass over.

“ I saw that lady,” says he, “ only six months before she died. She was so lovely at that time, that the most insensible person could not have regarded her without emotion. She was then on her recovery from a very severe indisposition, consequent to a fracture of her leg, which she had broke by a fall from her horse, in riding through the streets of Orleans. Yet neither the accident, nor the intense
“ pain

The death of pope Julius the third, and the election of Paul the fourth to the pontifical chair, gave another face to the affairs of Italy.—The new pontiff, though more than eighty years of age, and of manners the most austere, no sooner attained his new dignity, than assuming a conduct the reverse of that which he had hitherto held, he joined a luxury and pomp unexampled, to projects of the most irregular ambition. Irritated by his nephews against the emperor, for some pretended infractions of which his generals had been guilty, and inflamed with im-

“ pain she underwent from it, had in any degree diminished her charms.”

Though Brantome does not absolutely account for this unparalleled beauty, by any magic influence, yet he endeavours to explain the cause of it, by somewhat similar means.—“ Mais, on dit bien,” adds he, “ que tous les matins elle ufoit de quelques bouillona composez d’or potable, et autres drogues que je ne sçai pas.”—At the period of life when he speaks of the duchess in these terms, she was full sixty-five years old.

potent

potent resentment, he demanded the protection of France, offered the investiture of Naples to the king, and endeavoured to negotiate a strict alliance for their mutual advantage. — The wisest and most disinterested of the council were averse to these dangerous and chimerical propositions. They foresaw only disgrace and ruin, in the renewal of the antiquated and remote pretensions on the crown of Naples; they knew no confidence ought to be reposed on the honour or engagements of Italian politicians, of a man sinking under the weight of extreme old age, and actuated by two perfidious and violent nephews. They considered the state of the kingdom, exhausted by her long and incessant wars with the emperor, and beholding future ones in prospect against Philip his son. They recalled the numerous and ever unfortunate attempts under Louis the twelfth, and Francis the first, upon the Neapolitan dominions. — These considerations so truly weighty,

weighty; ought to have prevented any union or connection with the court of Rome; but the subserviency of all the cabinet to the duke of Guise and his brother, precluded so salutary an advice from Henry's ear. The cardinal of Lorraine, eloquent, impetuous, and vain, embraced the papal overtures with his accustomed enthusiasm, in the intention of placing the duke at the head of the armies destined against Italy. He was immediately dispatched in person to ratify and conclude the treaty; but during his absence, by the intervention of the queen of England, a truce was agreed on for five years between the emperor and France.

To rescind and violate this suspension of hostilities, the cardinal Caraffa was sent, on the part of his uncle the pope, to Paris, with a superb train. He saluted the king at Fontainebleau, presented his majesty a hat and sword, blessed by the sovereign pontiff, and made a magnificent entry into the capital. Intriguing and artful,

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artful, he moved every spring, and availed himself of every means. Catherine and Diana were both rendered subservient to his views. Flattery, presents, vanity, ambition, were by turns exerted or extended to gain their suffrages. Henry, irresolute, unwilling, and after long hesitation, in contradiction to the dictates of his own judgment, suffering himself to be borne away by the torrent, consented to the league.

Francis duke of Guise, nominated to the supreme command, passed the mountains, carrying with him the flower of the nobility, whom the splendor of his character, illustrious for courtesy, courage, and liberality, allured to follow him. None of the Italian powers could be induced to afford him assistance. The pope received him with every mark of external satisfaction, and celebrated his arrival by public festivities and honours; but neither the pecuniary or military aids he had promised, were ready. The duke
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of Alva, with an army, ravaged the territories of the Church; and the French commander, after an unsuccessful attempt upon the frontier of Naples, was necessitated to return for the protection of his allies.—No progress was made, no conquests achieved; and every thing seemed to portend a termination inglorious and ignominious to his arms, when an event equally disastrous and unexpected to the kingdom, recalled him from this critical situation, and extricated him from so perilous a condition.

Charles, who for near half a century had spread terror through Europe, no longer acted upon the great political theatre: retired to the monastery of St. Justus in Estremadura, he was forgotten while yet alive.—Philip, less courageous, but not less ambitious, assisted by the queen of England, and desirous on his accession to impress the European princes with ideas of his extensive power, assembled a prodigious army; but equally deficient

deficient in the bravery and conduct necessary to command it, he entrusted that important commission to the young duke of Savoy. The new general, after a number of feints, attacked the town of St. Quentin in Picardy. Coligny had thrown himself into it, and his obstinate valour served as a rampart to the place, otherwise ill calculated for defence. The constable Montmorenci, his uncle, advanced at the head of his troops, with intent to succour it; but with infinite difficulty did d'Andelot, brother to Coligny, find means to enter with five hundred soldiers. This being effected, he would have retired at noon-day, and in sight of the enemy, superior in numbers, and particularly in cavalry. The duke, conscious of the temerity of the attempt, and seizing instantly the occasion, charged the constable furiously, before he had time to issue the necessary orders, or draw up his forces. The horse were routed, and thrown into confusion; but the infantry

fantry stood firm, and were almost all cut to pieces. Montmorenci himself, with a number of inferior commanders, remained a captive.—Philip, who had not in any degree, conduced to this great victory, prevented the decisive effects it might have produced, by his jealousy of the duke of Savoy. Instead of marching without delay to the capital, which was already covered with consternation, and ready to be left desart at his approach, he compelled his general to continue the siege of St. Quentin; which Coligny yet defended some days, and in which he was at length taken prisoner.

Henry meanwhile, in this critical emergency, neglected no measures for the safety of his dominions. Levies of Germans and Switzers were made with all possible expedition; Paris was fortified towards Picardy; the duke of Guise recalled to the defence of France; and even the most pressing solicitations made to Solymán for succour, against the Spanish monarch.

These vigorous efforts were attended with a proportionate success. Re-animating by their prince's firmness and intrepidity, and recovering from the first impressions of dismay, the Parisians gave the most distinguished proofs of their loyalty and liberality. The duke of Guise's arrival, the lustre of his name, and reliance upon his great abilities, completed the general tranquillity.—Philip, during the remainder of the campaign, had performed no achievements, made no acquisitions proportionate to the importance of the battle he had gained. The capture of Ham, Catelet, and Noyon were feeble advantages, and unattended with any decisive consequences.

On the contrary, the duke of Guise, though amid the extreme rigours of winter, lost not a moment to succour the drooping genius of his country. After having been declared lieutenant-general within and without the kingdom, he undertook the siege of Calais, deemed almost impregnable, and made himself master of that city;

so long held by the English, in eight days, tho' it had cost Edward the third above a year's blockade. This signal success was followed by the capture of Thionville: but the marechal de Termes, altho' an able and experienced commander, was routed near Gravelines by the young Count d'Egmont; and he himself fell into the enemy's hands.

So astonishing a reverse of fortune served only to heighten and add additional splendor to the reputation of the defender of Metz and conqueror of Calais. He alone, amid the calamities of the state, could command the events of war, and uniformly attach victory to him. On him alone the public confidence rested, as the protecting guardian of France. By a combination of events uniting to the aggrandisement of the house of Guise, their power was still farther confirmed and extended at this juncture, from an alliance which approached them even to the crown.—Francis the dauphin, enamoured

of the young queen of Scotland, who had been sent, after her father's death, to the court of Henry for an asylum, obtained the king's consent to his espousals.—Mary, so renowned for her beauty, her talents, and her misfortunes, was at this time in her sixteenth year. Her charms, not yet fully expanded, are yet described by all the French historians, as so touching and irresistible; that a prince of sensibility, however languid, could not fail to pay homage to them.—Their nuptials were solemnised with unusual lustre at the church of “Notre Dame,” and consummated the same day, at the “Palais,” amid the greatest festivities.—A triumphal entry into the city succeeded.—The dauphin was on horseback, the young bride in a magnificent litter. They assumed the titles of king and queen of England and Scotland, after the death of Mary, which took place the same year. The court was immersed in all the gallant entertainments and diversions natural at such a time; and the duke

duke of Guise, together with the cardinal of Lorraine, found themselves at the zenith of glory and authority.

Two vast armies, commanded by their respective monarchs in person, menaced each other on the approach of spring. Henry and Philip seemed to be on the verge of a decisive engagement; but mutual dread restrained them, and peace, long delayed, at length was concluded. The constable, weary of his confinement, anxious for the preservation of his favour, jealous of the Guises, and dreading lest absence should efface and obliterate that attachment the king had borne him, requested and obtained permission to go to him in person, in the design of procuring a general pacification. He was received with testimonies of the warmest affection, and most unabated friendship, by his master; who carried his condescension and fondness to so great a pitch, as to make him lie in his own bed. It was determined to put an end to the war, at whatever price, or by

whatever sacrifices. After several conferences at Cercamp, the preliminaries were finally adjusted, and signed at Cateau in Cambresis.—All the Italian acquisitions, gained in the late and present reign, in Piedmont, Tuscany, and Corfica, were ceded, to procure the restitution of three inconsiderable towns in Picardy.—Calais, Metz, Toul, and Verdun remained to France.—The princess Margaret, sister to the king, was affianced to the duke of Savoy; and Isabella, his eldest daughter, taken from Don Carlos, Philip's son, for whom she was first designed, and given to Philip himself, become a widower by the queen of England's death.

These terms, humiliating and ignominious to France, were attributed to the constable; who from interested motives, and the desire of terminating his captivity, had counselled the king to accept them. The Guises loudly decried and arraigned them, as unworthy and unbecoming the national honour, and depriving the king-
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dom in a moment of the conquests of near thirty years ; but Henry was immoveable, and adhered to his resolution.

During the reign of Francis the first, and more peculiarly so since his decease, the reformed religion had made a most alarming and universal progress. All ranks of people had imbibed the new doctrines ; and persecution unhappily being superadded, hastened and promoted their influence. D'Andelot, nephew to the constable, and brother to Coligny, was justly suspected, and even accused of being a proselyte to these opinions. Henry, desirous to be satisfied of the truth or falsehood of the imputation, questioned him personally, what he thought of the Mass ; and d'Andelot, with imprudent zeal, made him so bold and undisguised a reply, that, irritated to a pitch of frantic indignation, he was about to have put him to death with his own hand.—It required all his uncle's interest to procure his pardon, and restitution to his post of colonel in the

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infantry.

infantry. The most severe penalties were denounced against the professors of Calvinism; and several members of the parliament, having presumed to declare against the rigour of the punishments enacted and executed on them, the king himself went in person, and ordered five of them to be arrested and carried to the Bastille immediately, who had avowed that sentiment in his presence. Orders were issued for their prompt and rigorous prosecution.

With the return of tranquillity and peace, every species of luxurious dissipation revived. Henry's court, the most effeminate, debauched, and polished in Europe, was rendered unusually splendid by the different entertainments exhibited on occasion of the marriage of Isabella to Philip. It was celebrated by proxy at Paris. Tournaments and carousals added a martial magnificence to the other amusements of a gentler nature. The duke of Savoy arriving, accompanied by the duke of Brunswic, the prince of Orange,

Orange, and a hundred gentlemen, was received with every demonstration of respect and attention by Henry, who met and embraced him at the foot of the great stair-case of the Louvre. This incident redoubled the festivities. Only three days after, they were interrupted by the tragical catastrophe of the king's death.

The lists extended from the palace of the Tournelles to the Bastille, across the street St. Antoine. Henry himself had broken several lances, with different lords of the court, in all of which he had shewn unusual vigour and address. On that day he wore the colours of his mistress, the duchess of Valentinois, in token of his homage, and in compliance with the laws of chivalry, where gallantry was ever mingled. Those colours were black and white, in allusion to her state of widowhood.—Towards the close of the evening, and previous to the conclusion of the tournament, he was seized with the inclination of trying his prowess against the

count de Montgomery, captain in his guards. He was son to that seigneur de Lorges, who had wounded Francis the first so dangerously on the head at Rameirentin in Barri; and was distinguished for his superiority in these combats above any nobleman of the kingdom.—Gatherine of Medicis, as if by a secret presage of the event, besought him not to re-enter the lists; Henry resisted her solicitations; adding, that he would break one more lance in her honour. Montgomery himself accepted the defiance with extreme reluctance, and endeavoured by every argument and entreaty to prevail on his sovereign to excuse him; but in vain. Henry commanded him to obey. He even fought with his vizor raised. The shock was rude on both sides; but the count's lance breaking against the king's helmet, he attacked him with the stump, which remained in his hand. It entered under the eyebrow of his right eye. The blow was so violent, as to

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tumble him to the ground, and to deprive him instantly both of his speech and understanding. He never more recovered them, though he survived the accident near eleven days.—The queen ordered him to be carried immediately to the Tourneilles: every medical assistance was procured, and the divine mercy implored by processions and public prayers:—but the wound was beyond a cure; and he at length expired, having only passed his fortieth year four months.

Constitution and affright, mingled with intrigue and artifice, divided the court; and the number of contending factions, headed by chiefs of the highest capacity, whom the late king's vigour had restrained within subjection, now declared their various pretensions without disguise.—The duke of Savoy, finding his life despaired of, solicited so pressing the accomplishment of his marriage with the princess Margaret, that it was celebrated at “Notre-Dame,” without any pomp,
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and in the greatest privacy. — The duchess of Valentinois received an order from the queen to retire to her own hotel, and not to presume to enter the chamber of the dying king. She obeyed. — Catherine followed this mandate by a second, enjoining her to deliver up the jewels of the crown, and other rich effects then in her possession. She demanded, if Henry was dead; the messenger replied, that he yet breathed; but could not possibly remain long alive. “Know,” said Diana, with undaunted intrepidity, “that so long as he shall retain the least appearance of life, I neither fear my enemies, however powerful, nor will shew any deference to their menaces or commands. Carry this answer to the queen.”

If Henry was not a great, he was an amiable and accomplished prince. Generous to his domestics, bounteous to his followers, he was adored by his courtiers and attendants. His conversation was
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amative and lively; his manner of expression eloquent, flowing, and graceful. An affectionate father, a polite and decent husband, a warm and animated friend, he was, in all the walks of private life, peculiarly an object of respect and attachment. Neither destitute of capacity or firmness, though governed by his mistress, and subservient to favourites, he could exert himself on important occasions, and enforce obedience. Fond of polite letters, as from hereditary right, he encouraged them in his court, where they made a rapid progress. In the prime of life, and with such qualities, his death must at any time have been considered as a loss to his kingdom;—but in the critical juncture when he expired, it was a calamity of the most dreadful nature, replete with future miseries, with massacres, crimes, and civil discord. He only could repress the daring spirit and intemperate zeal of the new religions: he only could restrain the intriguing genius of Catherine, and
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set bounds to the wild ambition of the princes of the house of Lorrain. His untimely end, and the succeeding circumstances of his sons' reigns, unveiled and gave a loose to every source of public evil and distress.

By the queen he left a numerous issue; four sons and three daughters. They will be all mentioned frequently hereafter. He never had any children by madame de Valentinois;—but besides Diana, married to the duke of Castro, of whom I have already spoken, he left a son by a Scotch lady*, named Henry; who

* Her name is said to have been Fleming; and she was in the service of Mary queen of Scotland, whom she had accompanied from her own country into France: yet others of the cotemporary writers call her "Mademoiselle d'Amilton;" and pretend, that she was related to Mary by blood. They add, that motives of policy and intrigue gave rise to the connection between this lady and the king.—The Guises, jealous of the despotic ascendant which Diana de Poitiers had obtained and preserved over him, determined

who was grand prior of France, governor of Provence, and admiral of the Levant seas.

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terminated to detach him from her; as they found she no longer treated them with her accustomed confidence; and that Montmorenci had supplanted them in her affections.—To this end, they artfully praised “*Mademoiselle d’Amilton*,” and extolled her to Henry with extravagant eulogiums. He saw and loved her. She did not scruple to gratify his passion; but their intimacy was concealed, even after she had borne a son, with the extreme care, to prevent its becoming known to the duchess of Valentinois.—Henry d’Angoulême, her son, was a generous, brave, and accomplished prince, though unhappily led, by the prejudices and madness of the times, to be eminently active in the dreadful night of St. Bartholomew.—His death was tragical and singular. It happened at Aix in Provence. Philip Altoviti, baron de Castelane, was his mortal enemy; Henry entered his house, and, after having reproached him with his many acts of malignant hatred towards him, passed his sword through his body. Altoviti expiring, had yet sufficient force to snatch a poniard from the head of the bed on which he fell, with which he stabbed Henry in the belly. He did not apprehend his wound to be mortal; but the friar who confessed him, announcing

We are now about to enter upon a melancholy period of the French history. Wars of religion, more sanguinary, more cruel, more obstinate and ruinous, than those of Henry the fifth and Edward the third, rise in awful succession under the three last princes of the race of Valois. The bright days of Francis and Henry, the noble and animating contests with Charles and Philip, are succeeded by intestine confusion, by the standard of rebellion and revolt. The kingdom, inundated with foreign auxiliaries, torn by her own children, drenched in noble blood, becomes a field of contention and desolation. Catherine, like its evil genius, mingles and embroils all ranks and parties. The spirit of civil and religious frenzy swallows up and extinguishes every sentiment of humanity, patriotism,

nouncing to him his destiny, he replied, without emotion, "Il ne faut plus penser à vivre ? Eh bien, pensons donc à mourir !" — He died twenty-four hours afterwards.

and even virtue—till at length a stranger prince, descended from the blood of their ancient kings, appears; and, as if sent from Heaven to heal the wounds of his bleeding country, restores peace, and diffuses universal serenity.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

State of the kingdom at the death of Henry the second.—Character of the duke of Guise—of the cardinal of Lorraine—of the king of Navarre—of the prince of Condé.—Catherine of Medicis.—Her character—person—political conduct.—Disgrace of the dukes of Valentinois.—Accession of Francis the second.—Power of the Guises.—The king's feeble health.—Assassination of Minard.—Conspiracy of Amboise.—Defeated.—Horrible executions.—The prince of Condé suspected.—Convocation of Fontainbleau.—The king of Navarre and prince of Condé arrive at court.—They are arrested.—Trial of the latter.—Francis's illness.—Condé condemned.—Intrigues and cabals of Catherine de Medicis.—Death of Francis the second.—Circumstances.—Character.—Funerals.—Arrival of Montmorenci.—Release of Condé.

PREVI-

PREVIOUS to our entry upon this short but unhappy reign, which first gave birth to the wars of Calvinism, and saw the sword of France unsheathed against herself; it is requisite to take a view of the great personages who will appear upon the scene, and behold the elements of future calamities yet latent and concealed, or only faintly unfolding the fatal principles of destruction with which they were impregnated. The unforeseen and sad catastrophe of Henry the second's death, awoke these dormant seeds, which might otherwise have slept in tranquillity. That superior and coercive power being removed, that had hitherto over-ruled the many jarring and discordant spirits with which the court was filled, a tumultuous administration succeeded, precarious in its basis, uncertain in its duration, and only supported by an extraordinary exertion of vigilance, circumspection, and authority.

Amid the confusion incident to the decease of the late king, the Guises had seized upon the person of Francis the second, the young sovereign. Their alliance by blood to the queen, Mary of Scotland, afforded them a plausible pretext to justify their conduct; and the characters of the two brothers, Francis duke of Guise and the cardinal of Lorraine, seemed to render them intitled to the first posts of state.

The former possessed eminently all those dazzling qualities which are formed to procure an unlimited ascendancy over mankind. Liberal even to munificence; courteous to condescension in his manners and address, he captivated the multitude. His renown in arms procured him the adoration of the soldiery, and attachment of the bravest captains, who deemed themselves certain of success under his auspices. Naturally moderate, equitable, and averse to cruelty, he yet zealously maintained the ancient religion, and opposed every innovation. Intrepid in the article of danger,

ger, either personal or political, he surveyed it without trouble or dismay, and applied to it the most prompt and efficacious remedies. Conscious of his own capacities for government, favoured by the peculiar circumstances of the times, and hurried away by his ambition, he gave the reins to this passion, and set no limits to his thirst of power.

Talents of an opposite nature, but no less seductive and imposing, characterised his brother the cardinal. Eloquent, and animated with unbounded zeal in the cause of the catholic religion, he was venerated by the clergy, as the guardian of the ecclesiastical immunities and privileges. Inferior to the duke in clemency and tempered courage, he was more enterprising, presumptuous, and vain. Elated to arrogance with success, he sunk into pusillanimity and unmanly terror, when oppressed by adverse fortune. Violent, irascible, and vindictive, he could not restrain or dissemble his feelings. Dissolute, and

fond of pleasure, he gave offence by the libertinism of his conduct. Greedy of power, rapacious of wealth, sacrificing every meaner consideration of tenderness or affection to the dictates of a stern and unrelenting policy, he knew no movements, nor pursued any objects, except those of elevation and aggrandisement.

Anthony, king of Navarre, first prince of the blood, was ill calculated to oppose these aspiring and turbulent spirits. Of a temper gentle, humane, and flexible, nature seemed to have designed him for times of harmony and tranquillity. Equal to the duke of Guise in personal bravery, he was far beneath him in every other point of competition. Politically timid, inconstant, irresolute, he wanted that firmness so indispensable in great emergencies. Fluctuating in endless uncertainty between the two religions, he neither could be deemed a Catholic or Hugonot. Voluptuous, and fond of women, he was easily induced to break his conventions of policy,

licy, in the weakness of private attachment.

Far other was his brother the prince of Condé. His person little and ungraceful, inclosed a soul the most heroic. Amorous from complexion, and of an address the most persuasive, he was beloved by women, and received from them proofs of their affection the most unbounded and intoxicating. Of high and determined courage, he was formed to shine in camps as much as courts. Indigent in his fortunes almost to penury, he had yet the liberality becoming his high birth. Professing with zeal the doctrines of Calvin, but little inclined to the rigorous manners of the Reformation, he made religion the pretext of those wars, which ambition, and hatred to the Guises, really produced. Not inferior to the celebrated Charles of Bourbon in the arts of retaining a licentious soldiery in subjection, nature had intended him for war, and vested him with all her capacities for the attainment of military glory.

With qualities such as I have described, he formed no unequal antagonist to the duke of Guise; whom he ever considered as his mortal enemy, and boldly opposed on all occasions.

The constable Montmorenci, long accustomed to occupy the first post of state, and too haughty to fill an inferior one, did not at once declare for either faction; but the pressing instances of Henry d'Amville his second son, and his natural aversion to Hugonotism, induced him at length to join the princes of the house of Lorraine.

The marechal de St. André, one of the most accomplished noblemen of the court, brave, polite, and elegant, but immersed in pleasures, and ruined by his debts, ranged himself under the same banner, and devoted himself implicitly to the duke of Guise's service. — On the contrary, Coligni, and d'Andelot his brother, both avowed profelytes to Calvinism, embraced the party of the princes of the blood, and adhered to it invariably.

Catherine

Catherine of Medicis, whom we have so long beheld obscured by the superior influence of the two successive mistresses to Francis and Henry, now first came forward, and rose into importance. Her rank, as mother to the young king, made her friendship eagerly sought by every party. Her talents and capacity rendered her equal to, and capable of the most arduous offices of government. A character too complicated, and containing movements too numerous and intricate for a common description, I scarce dare to attempt this difficult picture.

Endowed by nature with a thousand qualities great and shining, she only wanted virtue to direct them to honourable and salutary ends. Fond of pleasure, of letters, of magnificence, these were yet only inferior movements; ambition predominated, and swallowed up all other passions in her bosom. Born with a force of mind, a calmness and self-possession which might have done honour to the boldest

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man, she seemed to look down as from an eminence on human occurrences. Never alarmed even in circumstances the most unexpected and distressful, she knew how to bend and accommodate herself to them. Of consummate dissimulation, her manners, where she wished to succeed in any attempt, were ingratiating beyond the powers of female seduction. Sprung from the blood of Cosmo de Medecis, and emulative of the fame which Francis the first had acquired by his protection of learning, she cultivated poetry, and all the humanizing arts, amid the horrors of civil war; and extended her generosity to men of genius, even in the most exhausted state of the finances.—Expensive even to prodigality in the entertainments and diversions she exhibited, and covering her designs under the deceitful mask of dissipation, she planned a massacre amid the festivities of a banquet, and caressed with the most winning blandishments the victim she had destined to destruction. Cruel from policy,

licy, most from temper, avaricious from necessity, profuse from taste, she united in herself qualities the most discordant and contradictory.

Her person was noble, and corresponded with her dignity: the beauty of her countenance was blended with majesty. She knew how to improve her natural charms by all the magic of dress, and carried her magnificence on this article to a prodigious length. Expert in every exercise of the body, she shone equally distinguished in the dance, and in the chase. Her attractions were not fugitive and frail, but accompanied her even into age, and hardly quitted her in her most advanced period of life*.

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* Her complexion was unusually fine, her eyes large, full of vivacity and fire. She had, when young, a faultless shape; but grew afterwards large and corpulent. Her head was disproportionately big; not could she walk any considerable distance, without being subject to a dizziness and swimming. The extreme symmetry and admirable shape of her legs, made

These are only faint and imperfect outlines of a portrait, which must be known by study, not description; and which the events of the three succeeding reigns will afford me continual opportunity to retouch and correct.

While Henry, mortally wounded, lay expiring, Catherine, though externally made her take a particular pleasure in wearing silk stockings drawn very tight, the use of which were first introduced in her time; and the desire of shewing them more conspicuously, induced her to change the mode of riding on horseback, which was by resting the feet on a small board, to that of placing one leg upon the pommel of the saddle.—Catherine piqued herself on the address with which she rode; and tho' by her boldness in hunting she once broke a leg, and at another time received so severe a blow on the head, as to be obliged to undergo the trepan, she continued this exercise to her sixtieth year. Her hands and arms excelled any lady's of the court, both as to form and whiteness.—All habits became her, from the refined taste with which she adjusted every ornament to her figure; and her wardrobe was equally varied and splendid. Her neck and breast were of the most matchless and dazzling white. Brantome speaks of them with enthusiastic praise and pleasure.

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agitated with the deepest sorrow, yet provident of futurity, and foreseeing the natural consequence of her son's accession, hesitated in suspense what measures to embrace. Though she dreaded the capacity, the ambition, the influence of the Guises, yet the constable was more personally and immediately obnoxious to her. He had lately united himself closely with madame de Valentinois ; and had likewise started suspicions the most injurious to her honour and fidelity, by asserting, that of all the children which she had brought her husband, not one resembled him. On the contrary, the princes of Lorraine courted her friendship, and promised her the sacrifice of the late king's mistress, as the cement of their common union. This tempting condition, so grateful to a woman's vengeance, determined the queen. Diana, abandoned by the croud of parasites and courtiers, who had surrounded her in Henry's reign, underwent in turn the humiliation of the duchess of Estampes ;

tampes; and retired immediately from a theatre, where her presence was grown hateful, and her power become extinct. She spent the remainder of her days at Anet: and Catherine, satisfied with a political victory, and repressing, from regard to her husband's memory, any further pursuit, permitted her to retain all the splendid donations she had gained from the bounty of her lover, without diminution *.

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* It cannot be denied that the queen acted with the highest magnanimity and clemency on this occasion; she might have taken a bloody and exemplary revenge on her hateful rival. The marshal de Tavannes offered to cut off her nose; but Catherine would not permit or consent to it. The Guises, though intimately connected with her, and though principally indebted to her for their elevation and favour, yet were so base as to become her open enemies on Henry's death. — The cardinal of Lorraine would have been her bitterest persecutor, if his brother, the duke of Aumale, who had married her daughter, had not restrained, and reminded him, " That it would cover himself with infamy, to become the executioner

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KINGS OF FRANCE, &c. 365

The young king, Francis the second, who ascended the throne, was only sixteen years and six months old. A weakness both corporal and intellectual, approaching to debility, incapacitated him, even more than his unripe age, for the conduct of state affairs. Merely actuated by his mother, and by the two princes, uncles to the queen consort; he had neither judgment or passions to direct himself, or withstand their advice and suggestions.—When the deputies of the parliament waited on him, to express their devotion and duties, he therefore informed them, that he had thought proper to invest the duke and cardinal with the supreme administration, assigning to the former the

“ of his mother-in-law.—The constable would not desert her, from respect to the memory of his benefactor Henry the second, though urged to that purpose.—Diana expressed her gratitude to the queen, by a present of the superb palace of Chaumont, situated in the midst of those lands assigned her for dowry; and received from her in return the castle of Chenonceaux.

military department, and the finances to the latter.

The constable, who early saw this inevitable triumph of his enemies, had advertised the king of Navarre, and besought him to repair immediately to court, and claim the authority to which his high rank and birth eminently entitled him; but Anthony, slow, incapable of a bold and decisive resolution, and distrustful of Montmorenci's attachment, advanced by short journies, and stopt at Vendome. This ill-judged and tardy conduct, gave the Guises time to confirm their acquisition, and strengthen their power. Montmorenci, remanded into a second exile, was ordered to retire to his own house. The cardinal of Tournon was recalled, and admitted to an apparent association in the government. Bertrandi, to whom Diana de Poitiers had caused the seals to be entrusted, was dismissed; and Olivier, a man renowned for probity and honour, created chancellor.

Meanwhile

Meanwhile Anthony, stimulated by his brother the prince of Condé, arrived at length. His reception was cold even to indignity: the lodging assigned him was unworthy his quality, and he would have remained destitute of any, if the marshal de St. André had not lent him the one he occupied. When presented to the new king, Francis made him the same declaration he had already done to his parliament. His friends still exhorted him to remain unshaken, and wait the opportunity of regaining his interest and credit: but the Guises acting on his terrors, by indirect menaces of the king of Spain's resentment, if he presumed to controvert the queen mother's or her son's choice of ministers; and Catherine, on the other hand, alluring him with a promise of procuring the restitution of his ancient kingdom of Navarre, he submitted. After the ceremony of the coronation, he was sent to conduct the young queen Isabella to her husband, Philip the second.

Conscious of the precarious foundation on which their authority rested, and dreading some attempt upon it, the new ministers published an edict, forbidding to carry fire-arms, or even any dress favourable to the concealment of such weapons. This order, calculated for their personal safety, and indicative of distrust and terror, was followed by a second, which their interest dictated. The king declared, that he would permit no person to hold two posts at the same time. Coligni, who to the high charge of admiral, joined the government of Picardy, resigned cheerfully the latter, in the expectation that it would be conferred on the prince of Condé; but Brissac, recalled from his command in Piedmont, was invested with it. The constable reluctantly, and after many delays, laid down his office of grand master of the household, bestowed on him by his late sovereign's bounty; and the duke of Guise succeeded to it.

Animated by an intemperate zeal, the
ministers

ministers persuaded their weak prince, that he only adhered to his father's maxims and conduct, in commencing a persecution against the Hugonots. Courts of ecclesiastical judicature, armed with inquisitorial powers, were erected, which took cognizance of heresy; they were denominated the "Chambres ardentes," from the severity of the punishments they inflicted. The most rigorous search was made to discover offenders; crimes of the most improbable and flagitious nature imputed to them, in their nocturnal assemblies; and a death accompanied with ignominy, heightened by cruelty, was decreed for their adherence to Calvinism. It was not confined to the capital. The provinces imitated the example; and these unhappy people, forced into opposition, and emboldened by religious despair, began to attempt a defence against their oppressors.

The prodigious number of troops disbanded in consequence of the late peace;

the swarms of military adventurers whom the cession of the Luxembourg and Piedmont left unemployed, added to the sources of intestine commotion, and disclosed to the Calvinists the means of raising forces in case of necessity. The court was crowded with soldiers of fortune, who importunately demanded some recompence for their services. The cardinal of Lorraine, to whom they principally addressed their petitions, unable to satisfy them, and apprehensive of some conspiracy in this multitude, published a rash edict, which commanded every person, who had any favour to ask of the king, instantly to withdraw themselves, on pain of being hung up on a gibbet, which was erected for that purpose in the public square. A treatment so unworthy and unprecedented, irritated extremely all those against whom it was directed, and alienated from him and the duke many brave officers, who were before devotedly attached to the house of Guise.

Francis's

Francis's health meanwhile, debilitated and enfeebled by distempers, gave alarming tokens of decay. A quartan ague, with which he had been indisposed during several months, totally incapacitated him for any application to business of state. When this disorder left him, his face was covered with pustules, which evinced the malignant nature of his humours. He was therefore carried to Blois, in hopes of benefit from the change of air. The usual methods practised to diminish or abate the acrimony of scorbutic habits, were tried. A report prevailed, and even was universally credited in the environs of Blois, that the blood of infants was procured, to make him a bath. The same had been asserted of Louis the eleventh, in his last illness, though probably without foundation. From the remedies administered, of whatever kind, he however derived some temporary benefit and relief.

Meanwhile the severities against the

professors of the Reformed religion were redoubled at Paris. Anne du Bourg, one of the five members of the parliament, whom Henry the second had committed to the Bastile a few weeks before his death, was tried; and continuing pertinaciously in his opinions, was capitally condemned. His execution was accelerated by the assassination of the president Minard, one of his judges; to whom he had peculiarly objected, and who had been zealously active in the seizure and conviction of the Calvinists. The authors of this crime were never discovered. Robert Stuart, a native of Scotland, and who was afterwards in the battle of St. Denis, where he mortally wounded the constable, was suspected and seized. He claimed the young queen's protection, to whom he declared himself related by blood. Mary disowned his alliance, and would extend no mark of favour towards him. Stuart found resources in his own firmness and intrepidity: he underwent the

the most excruciating pains of torture without any confession; and was therefore absolved and dismissed.

Puffed to resolutions of the most desperate nature, by the ill-judged tyranny of their persecutors, and opposing the undaunted spirit of religious conviction, to the superior power of their enemies, the Calvinists began secretly to unite for their common preservation. Neither Louis prince of Condé, nor Coligni, though notoriously proselytes to the new opinions, had yet declared themselves their chieftains. A gentleman of Angoumois, named John de Bary la Renaudie, was commissioned, notwithstanding, by the principal persons among them, to collect a number under proper leaders, who, by different roads, should meet at Blois; and, having presented a petition to the king, should seize on the persons of the duke of Guise and cardinal of Lorrain, as enemies to the kingdom and public tranquillity. The secret, ill kept, was divulged,

and information sent of the conspirators' intentions, to court, from many quarters. The Guises, warned of the coming storm, took every measure necessary to avert it. Francis was removed from Blois to the castle of Amboise, as more tenable, and capable of defence. He issued letters, commanding the prince of Condé's and admiral's attendance; who obeyed. The duke's title of lieutenant-general of the kingdom was confirmed; bodies of soldiery were stationed on all the surrounding roads; and a company of musqueteers, mounted on horseback, was raised to guard the person of the king.

Notwithstanding these judicious and masterly precautions, the conspirators, in small bands, and marching only during the night, appeared at the gates of Amboise, unexpectedly. The cardinal of Lorraine, terrified at this approach of danger, betrayed the timidity which was natural to him; but his brother the duke, undismayed, and master of himself, instantly

stantly prepared to meet it with courage. His cool discernment appeared eminently conspicuous in this hour of trial. He assembled the guards, the nobility, and inhabitants. . . . Cautious, and suspecting the prince of Condé, he gave him the post of one of the gates to defend, but took care to accompany him with the grand-prior, one of his own brothers, who watched all his movements, and prevented him from lending the most indirect assistance.

The Calvinists were dispersed, taken, or cut in pièces. La Renaudie, with a few associates, was met in the forest of Chateau-Renaud by the baron de Pardillan, at the head of two hundred cavalry. He defended himself, notwithstanding the disparity of numbers, with a bravery heightened by despair. His followers being almost all slain, and no chance remaining either of victory or retreat, he spurred his horse up to Pardillan, and thrusting a poniard through his vizor, laid him dead upon the ground. He him-

self fell soon after by a ball from a hand-
gun. When killed, his body was
brought to Amboise, and hung during
some hours on a gallows erected upon the
bridge. — All the inferior persons who fell,
were treated with the same ignominy.
Their bodies, dragged at the tails of the
horses, were afterwards placed on iron
hooks round the walls of the castle, com-
pletely habited, booted, and spurred.

Some clemency might yet have been
shewn towards the chiefs. Olivier, the
chancellor, warmly advised lenient and
conciliating measures. Even the Guises
hung in suspense whether to pardon or
punish; when a new, but impotent at-
tempt to surprise the town, gave a loof
to the last severity. All who were taken
in arms, even though on their return
home, were put to death. A number not
less than twelve hundred expired under
the executioner's hands. The streets of
Amboise ran purple with blood; the
Loire was covered with floating carcases;
and

and the public squares were crowded with gibbets, on which hung these unhappy wretches, who infected the air with a pestilential smell,

The principal leaders were last led out to die. The queen-mother, with her three young sons, and all the principal ladies of the court, beheld this horrid spectacle from the windows, as a diversion. Two of them, under the agony of the Question, accused the prince of Condé as their accomplice, though concealed, but the baron de Castelnau, confronted with them, denied it highly, and in the moment previous to his head being severed from his body, attested and confirmed the prince's innocence.

Some suspicions remaining against him, notwithstanding these favourable depositions, he demanded permission to clear himself in full council before the king, Catherine, ever endeavouring to support the balance between the grandees, as most beneficial to her own interests, granted his demand.

demanded. The prince, with that generous intrepidity which shone in all his actions, vindicated his honour from the treasonable imputations cast upon it; and, after having given the lye to whoever dared to maintain or assert them, offered to engage in single combat, as the most convincing proof of his adversary's falchhood. The cardinal of Lorrain, who clearly saw at whom this defiance was levelled, made a sign to the young monarch to rise without reply; but his brother the duke, concealing his indignation with dissembled friendship, praised with warmth the prince's noble conduct, and offered likewise to maintain his cause against whatever antagonist. Yet in private, he advised to arrest him; but the queen-mother, who foresaw the utter annihilation of her power by such an act, opposed and prevented its execution.

The chancellor died at this time, of grief and horror, excited by the cruel and sanguinary scenes to which he had been a witness.

witness. He was succeeded by Michael
 de l'Hopital, an able minister, and devoted
 to the queen-mother. His advice con-
 firmed her yet more in that temporizing
 and intricate policy, in that perfidious
 hypocrisy, in those arts of division and
 opposition, which mark her character.
 She trembled lest the Guises should ob-
 tain a complete victory over the princes
 of the blood, and therefore secretly sup-
 ported Coligni and the Hugonots. A con-
 vocation was summoned in this view at
 Fontainebleau, whither the king was trans-
 ferred. It was held in her own cabinet,
 Francis being present. The admiral ad-
 vancing, threw himself on his knees be-
 fore his sovereign, and presented a request
 unsigned, in favour of his own sect; add-
 ing, that though no names were affixed
 to it, yet, whenever his majesty pleased, it
 would be instantly subscribed by an hun-
 dred and fifty thousand persons. The
 cardinal of Lorraine opposed it, with that
 floury, impetuous, and commanding elo-
 quence,

sequence, which distinguished him. No decisive resolution was taken, but the states were ordered to assemble, and a national council proposed, in hopes of finally adjusting these religious differences.

Neither Anthony or Louis were present at this conference. They had retired into Guyenne, where they were engaged in concerting measures to dispossess the Guises of their power and offices. The person whom they employed as their confidant and messenger, named La Sague, was seized at Estampes, on his return into Gascony, charged with a number of letters. The terror of the torture made him confess the method of discovering their contents. Those of the vidame of Chartres were regarded as peculiarly criminal. He was one of the most brave and gallant lords of the court, and had been so particularly acceptable to, and favoured by Catherine, as to give rise to suspicions and accusations very injurious to her honour.

mour. As he was however now become equally an object of her hatred, she caused him to be carried to the Bastille. He was transferred some time after to his own house, where he died either of chagrin, or the consequences of his debaucheries*.

Bouchard, chancellor to the king of Navarre, being seized, and actuated by the same timidity as La Sague, accused the prince of Condé with endeavours to

* The protestant writers, who detested Catherine, have not failed to accuse her of gallantries, among her other crimes. Jurieu particularly names the duke of Nemours, the vidame of Chartres, and the marquis de Mescouet, as her lovers; and declares her to have been criminally intimate with all these. Impartial justice must, however, acquit her from these imputations. Ambition, not love, was her predominant movement: Her conduct towards mademoiselle de Limeuil, of which I shall have occasion to speak minutely, was highly opposed to any such libertinism. Mezerai, and "Le Laboureur," only blame her love of pleasures, without any reflections on her honour; which are certainly to be distrusted as false aspersions.

seducé

seduce his brother to treasonable practices. Notwithstanding this act of undisguised hostility, they both remained unshaken in their resolution of attending the states at Orleans *. Their friends advised them

- Davila, the great directing historian of these times, beautifully lays open the manœuvres of the Guises to draw the brothers into the snare. Louis, says he, conscious that his co-operation in the late conspiracies and commotions might be ascertained from the papers and persons lately seized, peremptorily refused to trust himself in the power of his enemies :—but Anthony, either more innocent, or more credulous ; and deeming it impossible, that an Italian woman, and two strangers, would venture to arrest and punish the princes of the blood, inclined to attend the states. The count de Crussol, and the marechal de St. André, were dispatched by the king, to induce them, by dissembled assurances of amity, not to delay their journey. Condé still remained firm in his determination. This being reported, the marechal de Termes was sent into Gascony, and ordered to levy a body of troops, which might invest them in Bearn, where they were unprepared for defence. At the same time, the queen-mother, ever effecting her schemes by dissimulation, prevailed on the cardinal of Bourbon, brother to Anthony and Louis, to add his

to appear well armed, and numerous accompanied : but the mandate which the Guises, issued in the king's name, forbidding any other followers than their own household ; and the confidence which they reposed on their high rank, and relation to the royal blood, made them despise and neglect these salutary precautions.—New informations and intimations the most alarming, met them on their way. They were assured, that Francis and his mother, intimidated by the impetuous counsels of the duke and cardinal, had been induced or compelled to adopt measures the most sanguinary. The two princes, notwithstanding, continued their journey. On their arrival, they entered the royal presence, and saluted the king, who gave them a cold and un-

his instances to hers ; and assured him of the good intentions of Francis. These united efforts were at length successful. The princes reluctantly left Pau, and with a slender train proceeded towards Orleans.

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gracious reception. The instant of their departure, two captains of the guard took them into custody. Anthony was only carefully watched; but the prince of Condé was conducted to a house erected purposely in a public square, and defended by some pieces of cannon*.

The admiral was in Orleans at this time; but d'Andelot, more circumspect,

* The marechal de Brissac first proposed in council the prince's arrest. Francis signed the order, which was reluctantly countersigned by the chancellor.

"I saw the two brothers, Anthony and Louis," says Brantome, "when they arrived. The king entered the court of the palace on horseback; the prince, on foot. Never did I see a man exhibit a more bold and fearless mien than did the latter; but on his return, when arrested, he appeared covered with astonishment. Anthony, who had thought to disconcert and terrify his enemies by his menaces, and appearance at court, was not less confounded and amazed."

Davila very minutely describes their arrival at Orleans, the circumstances of the king's behaviour, and the queen-mother's pretended sorrow on their arrest. He says, both the princes were obliged to dismount without the gate,

and

and conscious of the danger, had retired into Bretagne.—The lady of Roze, mother to the prince of Condé, was arrested at her own chateau; and Grollot, bailiff of Orleans, was taken into custody.

Five judges, nominated to interrogate the prince, waited on him in prison for that purpose. In no degree dismayed by the violence exercised against him, he refused to plead before such a tribunal; and demanded a public trial by the whole parliament, peers, and king, as his dignity entitled him. This spirited and intrepid behaviour did not disconcert or delay his process. It was pursued uninterruptedly. He stood on the extreme verge of fate.—The Guises, already anticipating the sure destruction of this powerful rival, arrogant, and intoxicated with success, observed scarce any deference or decorum towards the queen-mother, whom they secretly suspected, and meant to divest of all influence or authority.—

Catherine saw the fatal error she had committed, in joining the princess of Lorraine, to her own injury, against Anthony and Louis—but it was too late to retract. The evil was beyond a cure.—Grollet's condemnation and execution was universally regarded as preparatory to, and indicative of that of the prince—when an unexpected and great event, big with the most important consequences, snatched him from the imminent and impending destruction. The king, to avoid the necessity of being present at the spectacle of Grollet's death, had gone out to the chase. On his return, he was attacked with a heaviness in the head, which at the end of some days produced a suppurating abscess, with an imposthume or fistula in his ear*. The symptoms did not at first appear

* Davila says, that Francis, being under his barber's hands, was suddenly seized with an apoplectic or fainting fit. His servants immediately laid him on the couch, without signs of life. He returned

appear alarming, or mortal; but the Guises, apprehensive of the event, and dreading lest their prey should escape, pushed on the trial with unprecedented and indecent haste. The customary formalities, observed in capital cases, were omitted; and the prince finally condemned to lose his head.

The chancellor, ever averse to the violent measures pursued, and seeing that Francis's malady grew more dangerous, artfully protracted his signature to the arrest for his execution. Of all the nobles and great personages with which the court was crowded—so despotic was the influence of the princes of Lorraine; so abject the devotion paid them—that only the count de Sancerre had the courage to refuse to sign it, though three repeated orders of the king were brought him

“ returned to his senses after some time; but it was
 “ evident from the nature of the attack, and the
 “ effects it left on him, that he could not long
 “ survive.”

to that purpose. . . Whether Francis himself had fixed to it his sign manual or not, is a secret of state hidden, and never divulged.

Meanwhile the physicians, compelled by the nature of the symptoms they observed in the young king, declared him near his end. The Guises, conscious of the desperate and critical situation in which their conduct had involved them, and believing their own safety inseparably connected with a steady adherence to the principles which they had hitherto pursued, stood firm. Placing their reliance only in the prosecution of them, they endeavoured to induce Catherine to join them in arresting the king of Navarre.*

but

* Monsieur de Thou, that great historian, relates, that the duke of Guise had determined to put Anthony to death in Francis's presence, and had induced the deluded prince to consent to it. Though the king of Navarre received information of this infamous resolution, he had intrepidity enough to enter the apartment in which he was to be assassinated.—¹⁶ If

“they

but she, too wise to be rendered subservient to their purposes—and freed from the tyranny they had exercised over her, by the prospect of Francis's death—refused to consent to, or permit his seizure.—She saw herself exactly in that situation to which she fondly aspired. The approaching minority left the regency open to her ambition. Both parties paid her the most assiduous court, as to the arbiters of their lives and fortunes. In the anticipation of her son's end, she took, with the most cool perspicuity and masterly address, the necessary precautions for securing to herself the first place in the government under Charles, immediate heir to the crown, and who

“ they kill me,” said he to Reinsy, one of his gentlemen, “ carry my shirt, all bloody, to my wife and son : they will read in my blood what they ought to do to revenge it !”—Francis, shocked at the enormity of such a crime, did not dare to give the sign previously agreed on ; and the duke of Guise, quitting the chamber, could not help exclaiming, “ Le pauvre roi que nous avons !”

was only ten years and five months old. Anthony promised in writing to cede to her the regency, which belonged to him of right, as first prince of the blood; and the Guises swore to serve her in every manner, for and against whomever she commanded.

Amid these intrigues and cabals, Francis the second breathed his last, on the eighteenth day from his seizure, and aged only seventeen years ten months and a half. His reign was about a year and five months*.

We

* The critical nature of his death, so opportune for the preservation of the prince of Condé, so fortunate to Catherine of Medecis, whom the Guises had deprived of all influence, gave rise to reports of poison. "Le Laboureur," and several other writers, have accused Ambrose Paré, the king's surgeon, and a Scotch valet de chambre, who was a Hugonot, with having poisoned his night-cap exactly at the place which answered to, and covered the fistula in his ear: but De Thou, infinitely more worthy of credit, denies and disproves this assertion. He expressly attributes his death

We know not what qualities he possessed, or might have discovered, had he attained to manhood. His capacity appeared to be overcome by the death to the weakness of his constitution, and maladies derived from his mother.

Davila seems to incline likewise to the belief, that he died a natural death; yet he mentions the generally-received opinion of his having been poisoned. "The young king," says he, "had always been troubled with pains and defluxions in his head, from his infancy. An imposthume formed itself over his right ear; and that bursting, so great a quantity of matter fell into his throat, that it stopped up the passage, and prevented him either from speaking, or receiving any sort of nourishment.—Most people," continues Davila, "believed at the time, that his barber had conveyed poison into his ear; and it was even reported, that the physicians had discovered evident signs of it. The suddenness of Francis's seizure, and the extraordinary crisis in which he expired, would have given universal credit to the accusation, if the disorder which terminated his life had not been known to have grown up with him from his cradle."

From the testimonies of these two last historians, we cannot hesitate to believe the king's death natural, and almost inevitable from his hereditary weakness and complaints.

pears

pears to have been very mean, and little superior to imbecillity, and his bodily infirmities added to these mental defects. Some French historians have absurdly given him the epithet of "The king without vice." Voltaire has drawn his portrait more spiritedly, and more justly, in his *Henriade*.

"Foible enfant, qui de Guise adoroit les ca-
prices,

"Et dont on ignorait les vertus et les vices."

His chastity has been made the subject of encomium; but to the feebleness of his complexion, and early youth, this virtue may be chiefly attributed; besides that his attachment to his consort was extreme, and her beauty such as to challenge the warmest homage of the heart.

Francis's funerals were indecently neglected. Ambition and intrigue occupied the whole court. Catherine, who had been ostentatiously magnificent in the obsequies of her husband, was equally remiss in those of her son. The Guises,

on

on whom he had heaped so many favours, to whom he had confided such unlimited power, by a conduct which marked them with the basest ingratitude, did not shew him this last and poor token of respect. They excused themselves under the frivolous pretext of remaining to console the young queen, their niece.

Among so many lords and bishops as were at Orleans, only Sanfac and La Brosse, who had been his governors, and Guillard bishop of Senlis, who was blind, followed his corpse to St. Denis.—Upon the cloth which covered his coffin, a billet was found, containing this severe and pointed sarcasm. “Tanneguy du Chatel, “où es-tu?”—It alluded to the funeral rites of Charles the seventh.—Du Chatel had been that monarch’s favourite, but was banished from court. At his death, he generously returned, and, as a mark of his gratitude and affection to a master he had loved, performed his funerals at his private expence, with a royal pomp.

Francis

Francis the second left no issue, legitimate or illegitimate, and the crown descended to Charles his brother. — Mary, queen of France and Scotland, makes no figure in her husband's reign. Subservient to, and awed by the daring genius of her uncles, she performed only an inferior part. They made use of her charms and influence over the young king, to bend him to their wishes and measures. In a court of such gallantry, where her beauty was adored, she could not escape some malignant and false reflections on her conduct, but they do not deserve to be mentioned, much less to be refuted.

The constable, who had been repeatedly ordered to Orleans, but whose distrust and caution rendered him slow, accelerated his march on the news of the king's death *. He arrived on the third day after

* Davila, usually so exact, and on whose authority we may rely with an almost implicit faith, expressly asserts, "That the prince of Condé was condemned to be beheaded before the royal palace,"
" previous

after that event, accompanied by six hundred horse; and, making use of the authority which his charge gave him, drove the guards from the gates of the city, threatening to hang them up, if they kept the king invested, in full peace, and in the centre of his kingdom.

Meanwhile the prince of Condé escaped, amid these unexpected changes. Francis's death unloosed his fetters. With a magnanimity and courage becoming himself; he notwithstanding refused to quit his prison, till he knew who had been his prosecutors and accusers. No

“ previous to Francis the second's seizure; and that
 “ the execution of the sentence was only delayed, in
 “ hopes to draw Montmorenci and his sons into the
 “ net, and to involve the king of Navarre in the same
 “ common destruction.” So that the constable's delays were chiefly instrumental to Condé's preservation. It is impossible not to be amazed at the bold and nearly successful plan of the duke and cardinal, thus at one blow to cut off, by a solemn and public trial, two princes of the blood, and the first officer of the crown.

person

person dared avow himself as such. The Guises declared that every step had been taken by the late king's express and particular command; but they did not produce the royal order, in consequence of which measures so violent had been pursued. Thirteen days afterwards the prince quitted Orleans, accompanied, as a mark of honour, by those very soldiers who had served as his guard, and retired to Ham in Picardy.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.